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# Lakeside Medical Center's Family Medicine Residency Program Celebrates 5th Annual Graduating Class



*From left to right: Richard Roche, Chief Administrative Officer and Hospital Administrator, Health Care District of Palm Beach County; Elisa Diaz, DO, Graduate; Justin Morgan, DO, Co-Chief Resident and Graduate; Samantha Choudhury, DO, Co-Chief Resident and Graduate; Takela S. Golson, MBA, Family Medicine Residency Program Coordinator, Lakeside Medical Center; and Nikerson Geneve, DO, Family Medicine Residency Program Director and Director of Medical Education, Lakeside Medical Center.*

Family, friends and colleagues gathered in Belle Glade on June 20th at <sup>TOP</sup> Lakeside Medical Center, Palm Beach County's only rural teaching

hospital, to celebrate the graduation of three residents from its Family Medicine Residency Program. Richard Roche, Hospital Administrator and Chief Administrative Officer with the Health Care District of Palm Beach County welcomed the more than 60 attendees. This is the fifth class of residents to graduate from the program, which was established at the acute-care facility in 2011 and is one of the few of its kind to focus on the special health care needs of rural, underserved areas.

"The patient-to-primary care physician ratio in rural areas is only 39.8 physicians per 100,000 people, significantly lower than 53.3 physicians per 100,000 people in urban areas," said Darcy J. Davis, Chief Executive Officer of the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, in a video address played at the event. "This unmet need and its impact on health is part of what makes the achievement of our three graduating residents so important."

The three graduates, Samantha Choudhury, DO, Elisa Diaz, DO, and Justin Morgan, DO, completed a rigorous three-year curriculum that included rotations in emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, geriatrics, general surgery, internal medicine, community and sports medicine, cardiology, dermatology, women's health, radiology, orthopedics, ENT, urology, ophthalmology and critical care.

"When we were in medical school we all wanted to help people, save lives, and truly make a difference," said Justin Morgan, DO, Co-Chief Resident. "Lakeside Medical Center has provided these opportunities, and so much more. I feel as though I have been a part something bigger. I've had the privilege to care for those in need while learning invaluable skills that will serve countless others, and for that I have nothing but gratitude to all those who have taught me."

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"It was the best of both worlds, a small program with lots of opportunities," said Samantha Choudhury, Co-Chief Resident. "I'm from Palm Beach County, so I loved that I was able to serve those in need from my community."

"I think it has been a good experience," said Elisa Diaz, DO. "For me the highlights would be the outpatient family medicine clinic, the mentorship of the preceptors, the varied patient population, and just doing hands-on outpatient care which I enjoy."

Lakeside Medical Center, which is accredited by The Joint Commission and owned and operated by the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, is the program's primary clinical training site.

"To you graduates and incoming residents, I have a few simple seeds that I would like to plant in your minds tonight that can take you far in your profession and your life in general," said Nikerson Geneve, DO, Lakeside Medical Center's Family Medicine Residency Program Director and Director of Medical Education. "The first one is to be humble. The second is to never underestimate the power of a good idea. The third is to always practice the art of compassion."

This year's graduation included two keynote speakers who serve as preceptors in the program: Yves E. Pierre-Louis, MD, Family Practice Provider and Clinical Coordinator with Florida Community Health Centers in Pahokee and Marie Florent-Carre, DO, MPH, Director of Rural and Urban Underserved Medicine and Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Public Health at Nova Southeastern University's College of Osteopathic Medicine.

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"I know you are ready for the challenge," said Dr. Pierre-Louis. "You came

and you served with class, dignity, dedication, respect, and compassion and I thank you. Go out and make a difference."

"Medicine goes beyond the clinical," said Dr. Florent-Carre. "Remember the lives you touch and the lives that touch you."

Following the ceremony, the three graduates, along with Dr. Geneve, took part in coating the program's five incoming residents: Danny Abouekde, DO; Samuel Espinal, DO; David Lepoff, DO; Terry Parsons, DO; and Nergess Taheri, DO. James T. Howell, MD, MPH, Chair of the Department of Rural Medicine at Nova Southeastern University's College of Osteopathic Medicine, was recognized at the event for planting the seed for the idea of a Family Medicine Residency Program at Lakeside Medical Center.

Belle Glade Mayor Steve B. Wilson attended the graduation with his wife, Alecia (Lisa) Wilson, Secretary to Palm Beach County Commissioner and Vice Mayor Melissa McKinlay. Also in attendance was Dan Liftman, Staff Assistant to U.S. Congressman Alcee L. Hastings. Rev. Robert Rease, member of the Lakeside Health Advisory Board, which governs Lakeside Medical Center, delivered the invocation. Also attending the graduation were numerous preceptors and several physicians who graduated with the program's classes of 2015 and 2016.

The Family Medicine Residency Program is funded by a grant from the State of Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration. The program's academic and community partners include Nova Southeastern University's College of Osteopathic Medicine, the Florida Department of Health Palm Beach County and Florida Community Health Centers. [TOP](#)

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