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Finding ways to lure doctors to rural regions

Wed, 07/31/2019 - 8:40am [North Canaan](#) [Millerton News](#)

By Quincy Cabot



Nine students from four schools took part in this year's Health Profession Rural Summer Immersion Program. Five of those students described their experience at a meeting July 26 at Geer. Photo by Quincy Cabot

NORTH CANAAN — The Foundation for Community Health hosted a lunch session at Geer Village on Friday, July 26.

The lunch was a wrap-up session following a two-week summer program in which medical students shadowed health-care practitioners in the Tri-state region.

The purpose of the program was to introduce the students to the challenges and rewards of practicing medicine in a rural area, and to consider a career in Litchfield or Dutchess County, where there has been a shortage of doctors.

The nine students came from four different medical institutions: Touro College, Quinnipiac University, the University of Connecticut and Marist College.

Four of the students had left the region as soon as the program ended, but five were present at the meeting.

Much of the discussion was about the distinctions between urban and rural regions regarding medical work.

The first was the nature of the medical system itself. While many urban physicians would refer a patient to another doctor, rural doctors would often attempt to solve the problem themselves, the students discovered.

Many of the students also agreed that the work-life ratio was far more sustainable here than it would be in a city. Devyani Ramgobin, a student from Touro, said that, "As a future female physician, you have a biological clock. It doesn't feel like I have much time left, so I do want a healthy work life balance between

my work and raising a family. I feel working in an area like this would offer me more of that."

Several of the students said they could see themselves living in the Northwest Corner. Abigail Dominguez-Trujillo, a student of Touro College and a resident of Miami, Fla., described her visit as "worthwhile." Simran Pandey, also a Touro student and a resident of Germantown, Md., noted that the doctors here seem to "love doing what they do."


While here, the students rotated through visits to Sharon Hospital, Geer, Noble Horizons and Hudson River Health Care (now called HRH Care); they also shadowed local EMTs.

The two-week program also had a cultural component, designed to show the young people that even a rural setting can offer fun things to do. They were offered discounts at Tanglewood and area restaurants including Morgan's at the Interlaken in Lakeville.

The students agreed that the most fun thing they did during their two-week stay was attending a performance of "Beauty and the Beast" at the Sharon Playhouse. Although they are from more urban areas, two of the students said they had never attended a theater production before.



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"I had been to a couple of Broadway shows before, but I think I preferred this show," said Greg May, a native of Suffern, N.J., and a student at Touro. "It was more intimate and you could really feel the community support among the audience members."

The Health Profession Rural Summer Immersion Program is hosted by the Foundation for Community Health (FCH) in Sharon. The program was created in 2014 in response to a community needs assessment by FCH that focused on ways to recruit new medical practitioners to the region.



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