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Physician Recruitment Seeks to Go Viral

The challenge of physician recruitment in rural areas is not a new one, but with healthcare reform and an aging population, the topic has been in the national spotlight in recent months. Now, Decatur County Memorial Hospital (DCMH) in Greensburg is using a worldwide stage and the reach of technology in its recruitment efforts.

“The Chair of our Board of Trustees, Toni Collins, suggested that we might follow Ryan Stone, as he completed a rotation at DCMH as part of his medical curriculum, using the video as a marketing tool for other prospective physicians,” stated Linda Simmons, President & CEO at DCMH. “As a result, our marketing department developed a script that identifies the unique qualities of our Hospital to attract young physicians. A professional shoot was conducted with Ryan, and the recently completed video has been posted on YouTube.”

According to David Fry, Director of Community Relations at DCMH, the video has a theme of “Big City Medicine, Small Town Care,” and highlights the aspects of a rural facility that medical students might find surprising. “Most would not expect to find a hospital in a smaller community was the first in Indiana to offer OB smartphone physician monitoring and the only one to do so along with a 128-slice low-dose CT scanner, offering a telehealth program, hyperbaric oxygen therapy and a simulation lab. We wanted to dispel any misconceptions students may have about the technology offered in a smaller facility. We also wanted our target to understand the unique role hospitals such as ours play in the community environment verses the metropolitan counterparts.” The Hospital plans to distribute the video in other forms as well.

Simmons acknowledged that in a CNN article last year Dr. Howard Rabinowitz, professor of family and community medicine at Thomas Jefferson University's Medical College said, “The shortage of rural physicians is a “huge problem,”

"About 20% of the population lives in rural areas but only 9% of physicians practice there," said Rabinowitz, who has studied the issue for more than 30 years. He cited a variety of reasons related to insurance, rising business costs and others.

Simmons stated the statistics only emphasized the need for new angles and to convey the values of rural opportunities and facilities. "While the Hospital's video can answer many questions that prospective physicians might have it is only a small piece of our ongoing recruitment efforts. We are always actively talking with persons interested in pursuing careers as physicians and seeking mutually beneficial partnerships. By taking a closer look, potential candidates will realize they can have the best of both worlds at DCMH by sharing traditional values blended with state-of-the-art technology, and a convenient location midway between metropolitan areas."

The video can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/user/DCMHgreensburg>. Questions regarding physician opportunities with Decatur County Memorial Hospital may be directed to Linda Simmons at (812) 663-4331 or www.dcmh.net/recruitment. The Hospital's social networking site is available at www.facebook.com/dcmhgreensburg.

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