

Phoebe General Surgeon Receives Volunteer Award

ALBANY - Each year, the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine's Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society recognizes a community physician who contributes to the education and training of medical students.

At Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital's most recent board meeting, it was announced that the recipient of this year's honor was one of the hospital's own, Dr. Craig Murray, a general surgeon for Phoebe, received the society's Volunteer Clinical Faculty Award at the School of Medicine's annual Faculty Senate Awards Ceremony last month.

"We were thrilled when he was selected. Not only do we want (residents) to rotate with Dr. Murray, but we want them to stay here," said Julie Roth, preceptor coordinator for the Southwest Georgia Area Health Education Center. "We are recruiting more like him, and we are proud to have him here."

After recognition from the board came a few words of appreciation from Murray himself. "I came to Albany out of my residency, and (Albany) has exceeded our expectations," he said. "My wife and I have been the true beneficiaries. This is a real honor. Thank you seems insufficient." Murray also has a private practice at Albany General Surgery, which he opened in 2006.

Dr. George Fredrick, director of the Southwest Georgia Family Medicine Residency Program, gave a status update on the program. One of the first suggestions he made was expansion of faculty. "Our goal is to rebuild the faculty," he explained. "You can't recruit good residents unless you have good faculty."

The program currently has six faculty members with several adjunct members. Eight full-time faculty members is the ideal. The program is expected to add five new residents this year, a group that was selected out of 752 applicants. Another problem Fredrick addressed was the retention rate for family medicine. Of the 173 students currently preparing to graduate from the Medical College of Georgia, 13 are planning to go into family medicine - all of whom are planning to leave the state.

"A lot of students are leaving. This is a young generation, and they want to go and see the world," Fredrick said. "It is almost as if family medicine is too much work and not enough pay, and that is what (medical students) are being told. We can still get some of these students and hopefully convert them to family medicine."

Source: The Albany Herald, 5/14/09, Jennifer Parks, Staff Writer