

“The Family Physician: Providing Your Medical Home”

Theme: *Describe the impact of a Family Physician in your life or the life of your family and/or the role of the Family Physician in your community. In what ways do Family Physicians strengthen the various aspects of the community?*

For many years in my small county there were only three doctors available. Visiting the doctor was associated with the thought of waiting long hours in a waiting room filled with sick people in hopes of being able to see the doctor. Because there was not much access to the healthcare, most people would either resort to urgent care or skip the doctor visit. Very recently, two new doctors were added to our county. One of the doctors is family physician Dr. Jonathan Buchanan from the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program. Bringing in new physicians to a town increases the health of the community. With more physicians available, citizens are more likely to maintain regular checkups which could then help in their long term health and reduce their overall healthcare cost. This is especially true for a county like mine with 27.2% of the population living in poverty.

Not only do they improve the healthcare of a community, family physicians also provide leadership in their communities. Family physicians, especially in small towns, become leaders in their communities. Dr. Buchanan came back to his hometown of Carthage to practice family medicine. Coming back to their hometown allows a physician to connect with the citizens of the town on a more personal level. Family physicians connect with patients because they are able to treat the whole person including providing education, engaging in disease prevention, and treating sickness. By holistically coordinating their patients' care, family physicians are able to better monitor overall healthcare. They also build long-term relationships with their patients and their families. Physicians become role models within their community. For example, Dr.

Buchanan was named Leake County's man of the year prior to even starting his medical practice because of the work he did with preventative care. Other young people in my county like me can aspire to the medical field because of his example. Doctors that are working hard to improve the well being of the town inspire the community to do well on their part also.

Family physicians also have an economic impact in their communities. Our county does not have a lot of industry and is not likely to attract large industry, but attracting a new physician has improved the economy of our county. On average, a physician in a town will create around 9.3 jobs. Not only do physicians create jobs but also just one physician stimulates around \$2 million in economic benefits for their community. For my county, having strong physicians not only serves to improve healthcare and provide leadership in the community but also improves the economy which makes a difference in a small rural county.