

**Riverside County  
Department of Mental Health**

**Jerry A. Wengerd, Director**



**Planned Psychiatry Residency Training Program Receives Accreditation**

*UCR School of Medicine-sponsored program in partnership with Riverside County mental health system planned to launch in July*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – A new residency training program in psychiatry, a partnership between the UCR School of Medicine and the Riverside County Department of Mental Health, has received accreditation and plans to accept its first class of four residents in the four-year training program this July.

The new residency training program was granted accreditation in April by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), the national body responsible for post-M.D. training programs in the U.S.

Inland Southern California has a severe shortage of psychiatrists, physicians who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, addiction and emotional disorders.

“The goal of this new residency training program is not only to train new psychiatrists, but also to recruit and retain quality graduates of the program to become a part of our psychiatric, medical sub-specialist provider workforce for the Inland Empire,” said Jerry Dennis, M.D., Medical Director of the Riverside County Department of Mental Health. “Establishing this program is a tremendous accomplishment and it will benefit the Inland Empire for many years to come.”

Residents will train primarily in the inpatient and outpatient facilities of Riverside County, including the psychiatry department of the Riverside County Regional Medical Center and the outpatient clinics of the Riverside County Department of Mental Health. The four-year program will enroll four residents each year, meaning there will be a total of 16 residents when the psychiatry program is fully developed.

Expanding residency training programs is a key strategy of the UCR School of Medicine to address the severe physician shortage in Inland Southern California, according to Dr. Mahendr Kochar, associate dean for Graduate Medical Education in the UCR School of Medicine. That is because physicians tend to practice in the geographic area where they complete their residency training.

“Consistent with our mission as a community-based medical school, the goal of this new program is to provide psychiatry residents with a unique training experience in learning how to provide recovery-oriented evaluation and treatment services in a variety of settings,” Kochar said. “We are pleased to partner in this training program with the Riverside County Department of Mental Health.”

A distinctive feature of the training program is the integrated neuroscience research curriculum in collaboration with UCR faculty, where the future psychiatrists will be able to learn about advanced technologies, be it stem cell transplants or health care delivery methods to populations, according to Dr. Andrius Baskys, program director, clinical professor of psychiatry in the UCR School of Medicine and practicing gero-psychiatrist in the county mental health system.

"The accreditation that was announced by ACGME is the product of a three-year effort by dedicated professionals at the Department of Mental Health and the UC Riverside medical school. This collaboration will bring together some of the most talented and accomplished psychiatric professionals in the nation with promising psychiatric residents to serve the mental health needs of this community", said Dennis.

"The Department of Mental Health has made a long-term commitment to improving the mental health system of care in Riverside County through the investment of resources in this residency program," said Jerry Wengerd, Director of the Riverside County Department of Mental Health. "We are fortunate to have the funding flexibility and professional talent that allowed this incredible partnership to come into reality."

Start-up of the program has been supported by the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD), which awarded a \$1.3 million contract over three years to the UCR School of Medicine to establish new residency training slots in psychiatry with a focus on training in the public mental health system. The OSHPD psychiatry residency program is funded by Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act passed by California voters in 2004.

Residency programs provide the post-M.D. training required for physicians to become fully independent and board certified in their specialties. Psychiatry training programs are four years long and, during that time, residents provide patient care under the supervision of attending physicians who are faculty of the residency program.

The UCR School of Medicine, which enrolled its first 50 medical students in August 2013, has as its mission expanding and diversifying the Inland Southern California physician workforce and developing research and healthcare delivery programs that improve the health of medically underserved populations. It also sponsors a residency training program in internal medicine and this coming July will start a primary care pediatrics residency “track,” the latter in partnership with Loma Linda University. A family medicine residency training program will begin in the Coachella Valley in July 2015.

**Related Links:**

**UCR School of Medicine**

**[www.medschool.ucr.edu](http://www.medschool.ucr.edu)**

**Riverside County Department of Mental Health**

**[www.rcdmh.org](http://www.rcdmh.org)**

**Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development**

**[www.oshpd.ca.gov](http://www.oshpd.ca.gov)**

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