

Phase I Non-Clinical Elective Description

Campus: All (Grand Forks)

Department: Family & Community Medicine

Elective Title: Going Rural Elective early in Academic Training

Course Number: FMED 9605

Location of Elective: Unity Medical Center, Grafton, ND; Altru, Devils Lake, ND; Sanford, Jamestown, ND; Sanford, Dickinson, ND; West River Health Services, Hettinger, ND

Preceptor(s): Jennifer Shaw, MD / Matthew Viscito, MD / Jared Marquardt, MD/ Kristi Midgarden, MD (Grafton); Stephanie Foughty, MD (Devils Lake); Justin Rosenau, MD (Jamestown); Rena Nordeng-Zimmerman (Dickinson); Cathy Houle, MD (Hettinger)

Course Prerequisites: None

Period(s) Offered: Phase I Elective

Curriculum Phase: 1

Number of students per period: 5 total; 1 per site

Elective Length in weeks: 4 weeks

Estimated # of Hours Required per Week: 40 Hours (A minimum of 45 hours is required for entire course)

Will any Face-to-Face/Zoom hours occur on Weekends? Yes No x

Will any Face-to-Face/Zoom hours occur on after 5pm? Yes No x

Purpose:

The purpose of the elective is to teach systems-based practice concepts in a rural community setting. Phase I students experience the strengths of community, what communities do to create a healthcare system and what is necessary to maintain and coordinate care across systems to improve patient outcomes. The student will do this by being present to all components of care, from initial patient contact to transfers between the local system and a larger system of care. They will be able to see care delivered in rural communities across settings: pre-hospital EMS, inpatient, outpatient, and long-term care. They will experience how interprofessional teams and ancillary services are key elements of coordinated care in rural healthcare delivery.

Objectives: Following successful completion of this elective, the student will be able to:

1. In the context of rural healthcare delivery, the student will be able to describe how systems provide care across a variety of settings including initial patient contact and transfers of care between local and larger systems.

2. In the context of rural healthcare delivery, the student will be able to discuss the roles of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), social services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, diagnostic imaging, laboratory services, nursing services, home healthcare, sub-specialty care services, pharmacy services, and the administrative activities that lead to coordinated healthcare delivery. This may include application of technologies, such as telemedicine.

3. In the context of rural healthcare, the student will be able to describe the role of the physician in the healthcare system inclusive of the doctor-patient relationship, physician-provider team, and physician community leadership. The student will be able to describe how each of these can improve coordination of care and patient outcomes.

Instructional Activities: During this elective, the student will be involved in/experience:

1. Students will work with physicians in all healthcare settings to understand the role and responsibilities of the primary care physician in rural healthcare systems.
2. Students will interact with Emergency Medical Services understanding their role in the pre-hospital delivery of care and the transfer of care between levels of care.
3. Students will spend time with interprofessional teams and ancillary services to see their roles in patient care and their impact on improving clinical outcomes. The student will be able to experience the systems necessary to coordinate care and interact between departments within the inpatient and outpatient settings. Students will experience the healthcare system addressing patient needs from initial contact with the system through return to home with home services. As applicable, students will experience technology use including telemedicine as a resource for rural healthcare delivery.
4. The student will connect with local healthcare administration and community leaders to understand the community engagement necessary to keep a rural healthcare system coordinated and functioning at a high level. This will include gaining an understanding of the community needs assessment process and its implementation to improve community health.

Grading for this elective is Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

Criteria for Grading: During and following this elective, the preceptor will:

1. Utilize the standardized UNDSMHS phase I elective evaluation form.
2. Use feedback from the healthcare team to assess students understanding and appreciation of rural healthcare delivery and its critical role in rural health outcomes.

Additional Information for Students:

- A Family Medicine physician at each site will serve as a mentor and teacher in a 1-to-1 apprenticeship model. Interactions with patients in the clinical settings plus wider-ranging aspects of rural delivery of healthcare, interdisciplinary teamwork and work efforts between local healthcare delivery entities will be woven in.
- The summer electives also have a lottery process where students will put in their preference for electives. Students ranking a GREAT elective for summer electives will also be asked to rank their site preference. A similar lottery process will be used to place students at preferred sites.
- Some sites may have available housing, but some sites will need students to line up their own housing. Some might have known connections for housing or be willing to pay 4 weeks of rent, but, the medical school does not have housing lined up anywhere through the medical school or any of our departments at the medical school.
- **Housing notes for June 2026** (*housing is just for med students participating in the elective; no pets allowed*):
 - **Hettinger:** Has student housing at no cost. They have a couple of furnished apartments not too far away from WRHS for student use (which they split male/female). The site coordinator Takota Turner is the housing contact as well (takoda.turner@wrhs.com).
 - **Devils Lake:** Has no provided housing for students. Although, Dr. Stephanie Foughty (SAFOUGHTY@altru.org) asks students to reach out to her directly if this is something they'll be interested in, and she can potentially look into a rental house owned by a retired radiologist. If that is available, students are required to pay rent and utilities.

- **Dickinson:** Has no provided housing for students. Some past students have been able to find a short-term apartment rental on their own at times, but nothing is provided and would be up to the student.
- **Grafton:** Has student housing at no cost. They most often house students in the foundation house right across the street from UMC, which is furnished and able to house multiple students, if needed. Rose Miller can assist with housing, rmiller@unitymedcenter.com
- **Jamestown:** Has student housing at no cost. The JRMC hospital has a 3-bedroom furnished apartment in town for student/resident use. It's co-ed and would have a max of 3 at a time. Cindy Tag-Nygord is the contact for housing, cnygord@jrmcnd.com