



UCSF Fresno
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New UCSF Fresno fellowship focuses on wilderness medicine and emergency medical services

FRESNO – On August 1, UCSF Fresno added another fellowship to its medical education program. The new fellowship in emergency medicine focuses on wilderness medicine and emergency medical services (EMS).

Wilderness medicine can be defined as specific training in how to treat medical conditions in the great outdoors when hospital care is usually several hours away. High-altitude illness, hypothermia, and snake and tick bites are just a few of the conditions commonly associated with wilderness medicine. A number of training programs exist across the county, including the well-established program at Stanford and the fellowship recently started at Harvard Medical School.

The wilderness medicine/EMS fellowship at UCSF Fresno is unique considering the proximity to Kings Canyon, Sequoia and Yosemite national parks and the Sierra Nevada.

“For the past few years, our Dr. Lori Weichenthal and several of our faculty and residents have offered a two-week wilderness medicine training program to medical students who conduct rotations at UCSF Fresno,” said Gene Kallsen, MD, chairman of the UCSF Fresno emergency medicine residency program. “This new program is unique because of our proximity to wilderness areas and our long relationship with the National Park Service. Wilderness medicine fellows will treat patients, teach emergency medical residents and work with emergency medical services personnel in Fresno as well as park rangers in the ParkMedic program to gain a better understanding of medical care from a pre-hospital perspective.”

Currently, national park rangers from across the country come to UCSF Fresno for specialty medical training. In fact, UCSF Fresno is the only location in the United States that trains ParkMedics. ParkMedics receive similar training to emergency medical technicians. The new wilderness medicine fellowship is a one-year program with one fellow selected each year. The first fellow to participate in the program is Brian Horan, DO. Horan graduated from UCSF Fresno’s residency program this past June.

“It is an honor to be the first fellow in this program and to be a part of building something new,” said Horan. “The need for this program comes out of a growing interest in wilderness medicine as more and more people venture out, and present to doctors with uncommon ailments.”

The fellowship will involve a core curriculum and a multitude of elective activities to help physicians gain a greater understanding of emergency medical services and health care in a less developed rural setting.

Training will take place at UCSF Fresno, Community Regional Medical Center and the three surrounding national parks.

(More)

Funding for the program comes from UCSF and Central California Faculty Medical Group, a physicians' group in Fresno.

The addition of the wilderness medicine fellowship brings the total number of fellowships offered at UCSF Fresno to seven.

UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program plays a substantial role in providing healthcare services to residents of California's San Joaquin Valley and training medical professionals in the region. The medical education program has trained approximately one-third of Central San Joaquin Valley physicians currently practicing in one of the seven specialties in which it provides training. Since its inception more than 30 years ago, UCSF Fresno has graduated more than 2,000 resident physicians. UCSF Fresno faculty and medical residents care for the overwhelming majority of the area's underserved populations. On an annual basis, the program currently trains about 200 medical residents, nearly 200 medical students and a number of fellows in cardiology, critical care, hospitalist, infectious disease, minimal invasive surgery, pulmonary medicine and wilderness medicine. UCSF Fresno also provides academic preparation programs for middle- and high-school students interested in the health professions through the Doctor's Academy and Junior Doctor's Academy. UCSF Fresno is a key partner in the proposed UC Merced School of Medicine and will play a significant role in the training of medical students at the planned school.

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