Medical students with San Joaquin Valley focus to begin clinical training at UCSF Fresno

WHO:  
The first five medical students in the UC Merced San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (PRIME) will begin their clinical training this week in a program designed to bring more highly-trained health care practitioners to serve communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

WHAT:  
Media photo opportunities will be available of students training in the clinical skills simulation lab. Students and faculty also will be available for interviews.

WHEN:  
Wednesday, April 24, 2013  
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

WHERE:  
UCSF Fresno Center for Medical Education and Research  
155 N. Fresno St.  
Fresno

Media: Please call (559) 313-6539 to confirm attendance. Please report to the front desk at the UCSF Fresno Center at 12:25 p.m. Parking is available in Lot 10 at the corner of Illinois and Fresno streets.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2010, UC Merced announced a partnership with the UC Davis School of Medicine and UC San Francisco’s clinical campus in Fresno (UCSF Fresno) to establish a medical education program for students interested in practicing in the San Joaquin Valley. The inaugural group of five students began their classes at UC Davis School of Medicine in August 2011 as part of the UC Merced San Joaquin Valley Program in Medical Education (PRIME).

The dire need for physicians in the San Joaquin Valley is well documented and will only intensify given the high rate of population growth in the region.
The Council on Graduate Medical Education (COGME), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recommends 60 to 80 primary care physicians and 85 to 105 specialists per 100,000 people. In 2008, the San Joaquin Valley had just 45 active primary care physicians and 74 specialists per 100,000 people, according to the COGME’s workforce assessments.

This is the sixth and latest addition to the University of California’s multi-campus PRIME initiative since UC launched the programs in 2004 to address physician-workforce shortages statewide. UC medical schools at Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco also have Programs in Medical Education, each of which provides innovative medical education that focuses on meeting the healthcare needs of California’s medically underserved populations.

The initial class of UC Merced PRIME students has completed the first two years of medical school at UC Davis’ Sacramento campus. The students arrive this week to take part in a weeklong orientation at UCSF Fresno prior to starting clinical training in the San Joaquin Valley.

The orientation includes: meetings with program directors, learning how to use electronic medical records software, tours of clinical sites, team building exercises, lectures and clinical training in the simulation lab.

The inaugural cohort of students includes:

- Sidra Ayub, of Modesto, graduated from UC Davis
- Kelly Fujikawa, of Fowler, graduated from UC Berkeley
- Agustin Morales, of Salinas, graduated from UC Santa Cruz
- Randell Rueda, of Fresno, graduated from UC Merced
- Christina Thabit, of Bakersfield, graduated from CSU Long Beach

Six students were admitted to PRIME in 2012. The admissions process is taking place now for the 2013-2014 academic year. All of the students will be graduates of the UC Davis School of Medicine.

To be considered for admission, applicants must meet the UC Davis School of Medicine admissions requirements. Applicants also must possess significant knowledge of the San Joaquin Valley, including a familiarity with underserved populations, public health issues pertinent to the region and a desire to practice medicine in the San Joaquin Valley.

UCSF is the nation’s leading university exclusively focused on health and is dedicated to transforming health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care.

UCSF Fresno, established in 1975, plays a vital role in providing healthcare services to residents of the San Joaquin Valley, training medical professionals in the region, conducting research that addresses regional health issues and preparing a pipeline of students for careers in health and medicine.

###