



Founding Program Director in Internal Medicine
Medical College of Georgia & St. Joseph's/Candler Health System
Savannah, Georgia

THE SEARCH

The Medical College of Georgia (MCG) at Augusta University and St. Joseph's/Candler (SJC) Health System are seeking a strategic, mission-driven physician-educator to serve as the inaugural Program Director for a new Internal Medicine Residency Program, based in Savannah, Georgia. This is a rare and exciting opportunity to build a fully supported, co-branded residency from the ground up, in partnership with Georgia's flagship public medical school and one of the state's most trusted and innovative health systems. SJC is in a healthy financial position and is locally owned and operated, making it a nimble and responsive partner in the creation of this program.

The Program Director will lead the design, accreditation, and implementation of this new ACGME-accredited training program. Initial accreditation efforts will formally begin in fall 2025 (though many application components are already underway), with the goal of onboarding the program's first cohort by July 2027. With notable support from the state, and the support of MCG's deeply resourced Graduate Medical Education (GME) team and the clinical excellence of the SJC system, the Program Director will shape a distinctive, high-performing residency program—one that prepares the next generation of internists for practice in Georgia and beyond, particularly in underserved regions of the state.

This is a transformational leadership role suited for a forward-thinking academic clinician with demonstrated success in medical education and residency training. The successful candidate will bring credibility with practicing physicians, commitment to resident-centered training, and the drive to build an impactful and lasting academic program in a dynamic health system setting. Preference will be given to candidates with strong GME experience and a track record of innovation, mentorship, and administrative leadership.

ABOUT THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA AND ST. JOSEPH'S/CANDLER

The [Medical College of Georgia](#) (MCG) is the state's only public medical school and one of the largest in the country. With nearly 600 residents and 51 fellows in Augusta, the Medical College of Georgia is actively expanding its educational footprint across the state. [The Savannah campus](#), originally established as a

two-year site in 2011 and now MCG's third four-year campus, launched its expanded program in 2023 and welcomed its inaugural class of 41 first-year medical students in 2024. The development of the Savannah campus aims to increase access to medical education and address the state's physician shortage, particularly in underserved areas. To that end, the school's recently redesigned curriculum offers a [three-year track](#), including the Peach State Scholars program, with tuition support for graduates who commit to serving in a primary care specialty in underserved areas of Georgia.

[St. Joseph's/Candler Health System](#) is a mission-driven, faith-based system recognized for clinical excellence and operational stability. Its anchor institutions, St. Joseph's Hospital and Candler Hospital, are two of the oldest continually operating hospitals in the U.S. and have been a part of the Savannah landscape and culture for a combined history of more than 350 years. With the addition of Mary Telfair Women's Hospital and The Georgia Infirmary, St. Joseph's/Candler offers nearly 700 cumulative years of dedicated service to residents of the region. Together, St. Joseph's/Candler is among Georgia's strongest and most respected healthcare providers, known for rapid innovation, strong patient/provider engagement, and deep ties to the Savannah community.

This new Internal Medicine residency is a key pillar in MCG's vision of offering expanded educational opportunities to meet the healthcare needs of Georgia's citizens, offering a co-branded, academically rigorous training program rooted in a high-quality community health system. The residency will begin with 30 slots and is expected to grow over time.

ROLE OF THE FOUNDING PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Program Director will lead the design, accreditation, and launch of the Internal Medicine Residency Program and serve as its senior academic and administrative leader. The Program Director will report to the campus dean of MCG-Savannah, Dr. Elizabeth Gray, and work in close collaboration with the Designated Institutional Official (DIO) and GME leadership at MCG, hospital leaders at St. Joseph's/Candler, and MCG-Savannah faculty.

This position offers the chance to establish a program that is deeply resident-centered, high-acuity and ambulatory-balanced, and academically engaged, with access to clinical research and state-of-the-art facilities. The Program Director will be hired through MCG and will be embedded full-time in Savannah, supported by institutional infrastructure, a residency coordinator, and future associate program directors.

The Director will lead the program's ACGME accreditation process, guiding it through key milestones and establishing the systems, policies, and culture that will define the residency. They will design and implement a modern, mission-aligned curriculum that incorporates best practices in clinical education, wellness, and both inpatient and outpatient settings. They will recruit and mentor staff, build an engaged leadership team, and shape the tone of the program from day one. The Director will oversee clinical training sites to ensure robust educational value and appropriate supervision and will work closely with

the DIO and GME Office to ensure full compliance with ACGME requirements and continuous quality improvement efforts.

The Program Director will also be responsible for building and sustaining formal evaluation processes, including milestone assessment, Clinical Competency Committee oversight, and annual program review and improvement planning. They will be expected to manage the program's operating budget in collaboration with MCG leadership, participate fully in institutional GME governance, and contribute to workforce development and physician retention goals for the region. Faculty oversight will include appointment and performance evaluation of core teaching staff and ensuring all supervision, scheduling, and duty hour protocols are in alignment with national and institutional standards.

Most importantly, the Program Director will set the tone for a culture of excellence, professionalism, and collaboration—one that reflects the values of both MCG and St. Joseph's/Candler and creates a compelling training environment for future physicians.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF THE FOUNDING PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Founding Program Director will play a defining leadership role in shaping a residency program from the ground up, supported by Georgia's only public medical school and a highly stable, mission-driven health system. This is a rare opportunity to establish a program with long-term backing, strong clinical resources, and immediate institutional visibility. The role also comes with key challenges facing the broader field of internal medicine education. With thoughtful strategy and collaborative leadership, the founding Program Director will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Build a high-visibility, innovative, mission-aligned residency program from the ground up.

This position offers a rare opportunity to establish a new internal medicine residency program that reflects the evolving landscape of graduate medical education and the strategic priorities of two mission-driven institutions. As the inaugural residency at St. Joseph's/Candler, the program will serve as a cornerstone of the Medical College of Georgia's growing Savannah campus and a critical component of Georgia's broader physician workforce strategy. The founding Program Director will lead the full design, accreditation, and implementation of the program, shaping its curriculum, culture, and clinical experiences. With no legacy systems to inherit, the Director will have the latitude to embed best practices in wellness, curricular innovation, interdisciplinary care, and quality improvement while establishing a training environment rooted in academic rigor and service to the community.

For MCG, the establishment of this residency expands access to medical education in historically underserved areas of the state. For St. Joseph's/Candler, it represents a meaningful investment in academic medicine and a deepening of its commitment to regional clinical leadership. Both institutions are fully aligned in their vision and committed to the success of this new program. The Program Director

will be empowered to lead and define a residency that is contemporary and responsive to the real and pressing needs of Georgia's healthcare system.

Navigate a competitive, complex, and evolving internal medicine residency landscape.

While internal medicine continues to represent the largest share of residency positions in the Match, the specialty is experiencing notable shifts in how applicants assess and select training programs. The founding Program Director will have the opportunity to design a recruitment strategy that reflects this evolving landscape, positioning the program to attract residents who are both academically accomplished and mission-driven.

Establishing the program as a dynamic entry point into a full spectrum of internal medicine careers will be critical. Equally important will be articulating a sense of identity and purpose, rooted in the clinical needs and community priorities of southeast Georgia. With the momentum of a growing medical school campus and the diversity of the region's patient population, the program is well situated to appeal to applicants seeking a meaningful, well-rounded training experience. The Program Director will play a central role in defining how the program is understood and valued within the national residency landscape.

Recruit and retain high-caliber residents in a culture that sustains excellence.

As the USMLE Step 1 transitions to pass/fail and traditional screening metrics evolve, programs must now adopt more holistic approaches to resident selection. For the Program Director, this shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity: to design recruitment and evaluation processes that identify true mission-aligned potential, and to build a resident community that reflects the values and purpose of the institution.

In parallel, the Program Director will be expected to address broader structural pressures that shape the internal medicine workforce. Creating an environment that supports resident well-being, fosters a sense of belonging, and provides clear professional development pathways will be critical for attracting high-quality applicants and ensuring that they thrive.

Embed educational innovation and wellness at the core of program identity, reflecting the best of modern medical education.

The Founding Program Director will have the opportunity to shape a learning environment that is both educationally progressive and structurally supportive. With no legacy systems to revise, the program can fully integrate emerging best practices in curriculum design from the outset. This foundation will allow the residency to align with national trends in competency-based education while remaining adaptable to the evolving demands of internal medicine practice.

Equally important will be the deliberate cultivation of wellness and mentorship structures that promote resilience, professional identity formation, and long-term success. At a time when resident well-being is a strong consideration, the Director will have the ability to build systems that support the whole learner. Doing so will be essential not only to attracting top-tier applicants but to sustaining the kind of clinical excellence, collegiality, and trust that define enduring academic cultures.

Foster a professional, community-responsive, and academically grounded program culture.

The Program Director will play a central role in shaping the academic and clinical character of the residency, establishing a program that is rigorous, team-based, and responsive to both institutional mission and regional need. Working in alignment with MCG's values and expectations, the Director will foster an environment grounded in interprofessional collaboration, resident well-being, and high-quality patient care. With the opportunity to train physicians in a region that offers both strong community partnerships, the program will be well-positioned to provide meaningful experiences across a variety of clinical settings, including urban and rural primary care and care for underserved populations.

Equally important will be building a scholarly infrastructure that invites curiosity, supports inquiry, and reinforces the connection between academic work and clinical impact. Residents will have structured opportunities to engage in quality improvement, population health, and community-based research, guided by faculty mentors and supported by a program culture that values continuous learning and reflection. In doing so, the Program Director will help establish a residency where professionalism and purpose are not mutually exclusive, but mutually reinforcing, preparing graduates to lead, serve, and advance the practice of internal medicine in Georgia and beyond.

Strengthen the Savannah campus and align with Georgia's statewide GME expansion strategy.

This inaugural role offers the opportunity to help shape the academic identity of MCG's newest regional campus while advancing Georgia's broader strategy to grow and retain a high-quality physician workforce. As the Savannah campus expands to enroll 50 students per year by 2026, the internal medicine residency program will serve as a critical bridge between undergraduate and graduate medical education, creating a pathway for trainees to remain in the region and continue their development in a setting they know and trust. The effort also aligns with a major statewide investment in graduate medical education. In March 2025, Governor Brian Kemp and the Georgia General Assembly approved over \$20 million in GME Expansion Grants to increase residency opportunities south of State Route 540, allowing for up to \$10 million of GME funding per program. The Savannah-based internal medicine residency program stands as a key contributor to this strategy, offering the opportunity for training in one of Georgia's most vital yet under-resourced areas for physician development.

By establishing a visible and well-supported residency presence, the Program Director will contribute not only to regional recruitment and retention but to the long-term strength of the campus itself. The program will enhance the educational ecosystem in southeast Georgia, support training in high-need specialties

and settings, and extend the reach of MCG's academic mission in one of the state's most vibrant and livable communities.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Required Qualifications:

- MD or DO with current certification in Internal Medicine through the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM).
- At least three years of documented educational and/or administrative experience within an ACGME-accredited internal medicine residency program, or qualifications acceptable to the Review Committee.
- Active and ongoing clinical engagement, and eligible for unrestricted medical licensure in the state of Georgia.
- Demonstrated experience working within interdisciplinary, interprofessional teams to support an educational environment that promotes high-quality care, patient safety, and resident well-being.
- Familiarity with ACGME program requirements and accreditation processes, including resident evaluation, duty hours, and curriculum oversight.

Preferred Attributes:

- Five or more years of progressive responsibility in graduate medical education (e.g., as associate program director, core faculty, or site director).
- Experience launching or significantly redesigning a residency program or curriculum.
- A track record of mentoring faculty and learners, and of building systems that support wellness, engagement, and continuous improvement.
- Understanding of the challenges facing internal medicine training today, including recruitment, burnout, and preparation for a range of career paths.

Personal and Leadership Characteristics:

- A collaborative and consultative leadership style, with the ability to build trust, foster alignment, and inspire action across institutional boundaries.
- Sound judgment, discretion, and a high level of professionalism, especially when navigating complex academic or clinical environments.
- Strong strategic thinking skills, with the ability to anticipate program needs and align decisions with both institutional goals and regulatory standards.
- Clear, confident communication skills, with the capacity to engage effectively with medical students, residents, faculty, hospital leaders, and external partners.
- A thoughtful, learner-centered approach to training, grounded in equity, reflection, and respect.

- Resilience, adaptability, and the ability to lead through ambiguity—critical for establishing a new program with a long-term vision and day-to-day execution.
- A commitment to advancing the academic mission of both the Medical College of Georgia and St. Joseph's/Candler through excellence in education, collaboration, and service.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/st-josephs-candler-health-system/inaugural-director-internal-medicine-residency> Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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