



Founding Program Director in Family 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 an innovative, mission-driven physician-educator to serve as the inaugural Program Director for a new Family 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.

The Program Director will lead the design, accreditation, and implementation of this new ACGME-accredited training program, building upon the foundation of St. Joseph's/Candler's successfully launched Internal Medicine residency. Initial accreditation efforts for Family Medicine begin in 2026, with the goal of onboarding the program's first cohort by July 2028. With the support of MCG's deeply resourced Graduate Medical Education (GME) team, the clinical excellence of the SJC system, and a \$10 million state investment in GME infrastructure including dedicated educational facilities opening in 2027, the Program Director will shape a distinctive, high-performing residency program that prepares the next generation of family medicine practitioners in Georgia and beyond, particularly in underserved regions of the state.

A key component of this founding role will be establishing the program's primary ambulatory training site. The residency has identified clinic space for Family Medicine at the historic Georgia Infirmary building in downtown Savannah. This service-based clinic will serve as a cornerstone of the residency's commitment to community-centered care. The Program Director will have significant input in shaping what this clinic looks like, determining the populations served, and establishing care models that align with the program's educational mission. This represents a unique opportunity to design a teaching clinic that embodies the program's values while addressing genuine community health needs, particularly for underserved populations in the downtown area.

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 five to six years of 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 and the four-year regional campus launched in Savannah in 2023, MCG is actively expanding its educational footprint across the state. [The Savannah campus](#), MCG's third four-year location, welcomed its inaugural class of 41 first-year medical students in 2024 in partnership with Georgia Southern University. 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—the first hospital in Georgia chartered to serve African Americans and descendants of enslaved people—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, patient engagement, and deep ties to the Savannah community.

St. Joseph's/Candler represents a major health system making a transformational investment in graduate medical education. With a growing GME enterprise that will eventually encompass Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, and Surgery residencies, as well as a Cardiology fellowship, SJC is positioning itself as a cornerstone of medical education in southeast Georgia. The system's strong financial position and location in Georgia's fastest-growing county provide a stable foundation for sustained GME expansion.

This new Family 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 reach 24 residents at full capacity (8 residents per year across three years) and may expand over time based on community needs and institutional capacity.

ROLE OF THE FOUNDING PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Program Director will lead the design, accreditation, and launch of the Family 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), 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, comprehensive in scope, and academically engaged, with emphasis on full-spectrum family medicine, including robust obstetric, pediatric, geriatric, and adult medicine experiences. The Program Director will benefit from joining an established and growing GME infrastructure, with experienced GME leadership, newly constructed educational facilities, and the momentum of a successful Internal Medicine residency launch. The position requires exceptional relationship-building skills to foster collaborative partnerships across departments and ensure comprehensive training experiences across all domains of family medicine.

The Program Director will lead the program's ACGME accreditation process from the ground up, 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 ambulatory care. They will recruit and mentor faculty, build an engaged leadership team, and shape the tone and culture of the program from day one. The Program 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, equity, professionalism, and collaboration 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 within a rapidly expanding GME enterprise, supported by Georgia's only public medical school and a financially strong, locally-governed health system. While this represents the inaugural Family Medicine program, the Program Director will benefit from established GME infrastructure, successful Internal Medicine residency precedent, and substantial state investment in educational facilities. The role also comes with key challenges facing the broader field of family medicine education. With thoughtful strategy and collaborative leadership, the Founding Program Director will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Build a high-visibility, community-embedded family medicine residency grounded in comprehensive care.

This position offers a rare opportunity to establish a new family medicine residency program that is deeply rooted in comprehensive, community-based care and aligned with the strategic priorities of two mission-driven institutions. As the inaugural family medicine 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 primary care workforce strategy. The Founding Program Director will lead the design, accreditation, and implementation of the program, shaping its curriculum, culture, and clinical experiences from the ground up, with a focus on continuity of care, team-based practice, and service across the lifespan. Central to this vision is the establishment of a service-oriented ambulatory clinic at the historic Georgia Infirmary site, allowing the Program Director to create a teaching environment that honors the facility's legacy of serving marginalized communities while addressing contemporary health disparities.

With no legacy systems to inherit, the Program Director will have the opportunity to intentionally design a modern family medicine training environment that reflects the realities of contemporary primary care. The residency will integrate longitudinal ambulatory practice with inpatient and community-based experiences, preparing graduates for full-scope practice and leadership in diverse settings, with particular emphasis on serving historically marginalized and medically underserved populations. For the Medical College of Georgia, this residency expands access to medical education in an underserved region; for St. Joseph's/Candler, it represents a sustained investment in academic medicine and community health. Together, these partners are committed to building a high-visibility program that strengthens the Savannah campus while addressing the pressing primary care needs of southeast Georgia.

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

Family medicine residency programs operate in a highly competitive and rapidly evolving national environment, shaped by persistent primary care shortages, changing applicant priorities, and increasing variation in training scope across programs. Today's family medicine applicants evaluate programs not only on clinical quality, but on clarity of mission, scope of practice, continuity experience, wellness, and alignment with personal and professional values. The Founding Program Director will be charged with designing a recruitment and selection strategy that reflects this complexity, positioning the program to attract residents who are academically strong, community-oriented, and committed to comprehensive primary care.

Establishing a clear and compelling program identity will be essential in differentiating the residency within a crowded Match landscape. The program must articulate its role as a gateway to full-scope family medicine careers, including community-based primary care, rural practice, hospital-based care, and academic and leadership pathways. Rooted in the healthcare needs and community priorities of southeast Georgia and supported by the momentum of the Medical College of Georgia's growing Savannah campus

and the clinical depth of St. Joseph's/Candler, the residency is well-positioned to appeal to applicants seeking purpose-driven training. The Program Director will play a central role in shaping how the program is perceived, valued, and sustained within the national family medicine residency landscape.

Position the program as a compelling pathway to underserved and community-based practice.

Family medicine plays a central role in addressing persistent access gaps across urban, rural, and underserved communities, and residency training is a critical determinant of where and how physicians ultimately practice. The Founding Program Director will have the opportunity to intentionally design a residency that prepares graduates for meaningful, community-responsive careers by aligning training experiences with the real-world needs of diverse patient populations. This includes creating robust exposure to safety-net settings, diverse practice environments, and community-based care models that reflect the breadth and adaptability of modern family medicine.

Anchored by the Medical College of Georgia's Savannah campus and the clinical reach of St. Joseph's/Candler, the program is well-positioned to serve as a durable pipeline for physicians committed to practice in southeast Georgia and similar environments nationwide. The Program Director will be responsible for articulating and operationalizing this workforce mission, ensuring that clinical rotations, continuity experiences, and mentorship pathways reinforce family medicine's role as a cornerstone of accessible, high-quality care. In doing so, the residency will distinguish itself as a destination for trainees seeking purpose-driven careers and as a strategic asset to the communities it serves.

Navigate complex training requirements while building departmental partnerships.

Family medicine residencies require comprehensive training across the entire lifespan, demanding robust educational experiences in pediatrics, obstetrics, geriatrics, and adult medicine. The Founding Program Director will need to creatively develop partnerships with other specialties to provide clinical experiences that meet ACGME requirements for family medicine residency graduates. This will require diplomatic skill, persistence, and innovative thinking to establish collaborative relationships with specialty departments and community partners. The Program Director must balance educational imperatives with institutional realities, finding creative solutions to ensure residents receive full-spectrum training while building trust and buy-in across the organization. Success will depend on the ability to articulate the value of family medicine training to diverse stakeholders and develop mutually beneficial educational partnerships.

The Georgia Infirmary clinic site presents both unique opportunities and responsibilities in meeting these training needs. Serving a diverse, medically underserved population in downtown Savannah, the clinic will provide residents with extensive experience caring for patients from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. This setting naturally aligns with ACGME priorities around health equity, cost-effective care, and serving diverse communities. The Program Director will need to thoughtfully develop this clinical site to ensure adequate patient volume while maintaining the clinic's service mission, creating an environment where educational excellence and community benefit reinforce each other. By thoughtfully integrating these

diverse training elements, the Program Director will create a residency that produces physicians uniquely prepared to deliver comprehensive family medicine in complex healthcare environments, with the skills and commitment to address persistent health disparities and strengthen primary care infrastructure in underserved communities.

Build interdisciplinary, team-based training that reflects the realities of modern primary care delivery.

The Founding Program Director will play a central role in shaping a residency culture that mirrors how high-quality primary care is delivered today—through interdisciplinary, team-based models that address clinical complexity, social need, and population health. Working in alignment with the values and expectations of the Medical College of Georgia, the Program Director will foster an environment grounded in collaboration among physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, and community partners. This approach will prepare residents to function effectively within care teams while maintaining accountability for continuity, access, and comprehensive patient-centered care.

Supported by the clinical infrastructure and community reach of St. Joseph's/Candler, the residency will offer meaningful experiences across outpatient, inpatient, and community-based settings, with deep engagement in caring for underserved populations, including those facing socioeconomic challenges, health disparities, and barriers to care access. The Program Director will also be responsible for embedding quality improvement, population health, and systems-based practice into everyday clinical training, reinforcing the connection between team-based care and improved outcomes. Through these initiatives, the Program Director will help establish a program that prepares graduates not only to practice family medicine effectively, but to lead care teams, improve systems, and advance primary care delivery in Georgia and beyond.

Strengthen the Savannah campus and Georgia's primary care workforce pipeline through intentional GME-UME alignment.

This inaugural role offers a significant opportunity to help shape the academic identity of the Medical College of Georgia's Savannah campus while advancing Georgia's broader strategy to grow and retain a strong primary care workforce. As the Savannah campus expands to enroll 50 students per year, the family medicine residency will serve as a critical bridge between undergraduate and graduate medical education, creating a clear, mission-aligned pathway for students to remain in the region and continue their training in a setting they know and trust. The Founding Program Director will play a central role in aligning curricular experiences, mentorship, and advising across the UME–GME continuum to support early exposure to family medicine and sustained interest in primary care careers.

By establishing a robust and visible family medicine residency presence in Savannah, the Program Director will contribute to both local physician recruitment and the long-term strength and stability of the campus itself. The program will enhance the educational ecosystem in southeast Georgia, reinforce family medicine as a cornerstone of community health, and support the preparation of physicians committed to

addressing health disparities and serving medically underserved communities throughout the region. Through this approach, the residency will extend the reach of MCG's academic mission while serving as a durable workforce asset for the state and the communities it serves.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Required Qualifications:

- MD or DO with current certification in Family Medicine through the American Board of Family Medicine or by the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians.
- At least three years of documented educational and/or administrative experience within an ACGME-accredited family 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 family medicine training today, including recruitment, burnout, and preparation for a range of career paths.
- Track record of successfully navigating complex institutional dynamics and building consensus among diverse stakeholders, particularly in securing educational partnerships with specialty departments.
- Demonstrated experience establishing comprehensive training components across the lifespan, including developing strategies for adequate patient volume and educational experiences in community settings.
- Understanding of GME financing models and ability to build financially sustainable programs that operate efficiently while maintaining educational excellence.
- Experience with program building or substantial program transformation, with the confidence to work from a blank slate while leveraging existing institutional resources.

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.
- 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.
- A deep commitment to community engagement and health equity, with a vision for developing a service-oriented clinical training environment that addresses the needs of underserved populations while honoring the historic mission of serving all community members.
- Resilience, adaptability, and the ability to lead through ambiguity.
- Political acumen and diplomatic skills to navigate institutional complexities, build bridges across specialties, and achieve educational objectives while respecting diverse stakeholder perspectives.
- 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-josephscandler-health-system/inaugural-program-director-family-medicine>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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