The Warren and Rosalee Heffron Faculty & Graduate Fellowship for International Health

The UNM School of Medicine’s Department of Family and Community Medicine is pleased to announce the Warren and Rosalee Heffron Faculty & Graduate Fellowship for International Health.

Warren and Rosalee Heffron

Longtime UNM faculty member and former Family and Community Medicine Department Chair Warren Heffron and his wife, Rosalee, have devoted their lives to healing, both in the United States and abroad. This fellowship will honor their commitment and support their mission.

Dr. Heffron came to the University of New Mexico in 1968 and subsequently started its family medicine residency program, serving as the program’s director for 12 years. He then became chair of the Department of Family Medicine, and served in that role for another 12 years. He was chief of the medical staff at UNMH for one year. Dr. Heffron met his wife, Rosalee, when he was at the University of Missouri. As a former teacher and active community volunteer, she has shared and supported Dr. Heffron’s career, participating in some of his international outreach. Together they raised four children.

Dr. Heffron has consulted and taught in Albania, Brazil, Chile, China, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, and Venezuela, to name a few. He has taught thousands of students, who in turn taught other health care workers.

In addition, he has authored numerous journal articles and book chapters.

Consulting and teaching family practice residencies in economically developing countries are Dr. Heffron’s main professional interests. However, his real passion is starting residency programs in mission hospitals. He said they are the perfect place to train family doctors because of the faculty’s commitment to practicing individual medicine in the context of the community.

Dr. Heffron is:

- Professor Emeritus — UNM Department of Family and Community Medicine
- North American President — WONCA - The World Organization of Family Doctors
- Past President — American Board of Family Medicine
- Past President — United States Christian Medical & Dental Association (CMDA)
- Delegate — International CMDA
- Past President — NM Medical Society
- Past President — NM Chapter, American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
- Past Vice President — AAFP

Dr. Heffron teaching suturing techniques to students in Albania
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Supporting Graduate Medical Education and Cultural Exchange

When endowed, this Fellowship will support and offer experiences in international health on two levels:

- Fund junior-level faculty physicians from foreign countries for one- to two-month study and faculty development in family medicine at UNM
- Fund UNM Family Medicine resident for one-month study in an international rotation

Fellowship fund will be used to support travel and living expenses up to $4,000 per person.

Impacting World Health

Teaching physicians to teach is an important way to impact world health. This does not seek to impose the American medical education system on others. Rather, it exposes junior faculty from other countries to new methods, allowing them to decide what is appropriate to incorporate into their own teaching. Physicians who have gone through the fellowship program return to their home institutions inspired to try new training methods with their own residents.

Creating Better Physicians

Altruism drives many resident physicians’ decisions to undertake a foreign rotation as a way to make an impact on the world. It is also a way to improve their clinical skills. Even those physicians who never work abroad again take the benefits of their experiences into their local practices in the United States.

Practice experiences in developing countries teach young physicians to rely on the basics of their education and training, rather than technology. When MRI scans and other tests are unavailable, they depend on patient history, understanding the societal context of the patient’s life and disease process, and their own knowledge of the body’s systems to make a diagnosis and treatment plan.

“There is also a benefit in seeing how medical practice and medical education take place in other societies. Dr. Heffron said, “When we as doctors can communicate across a cultural divide, it makes a big difference in getting into people’s lives.”

“After completing my fellowship at UNM, I came back to my medical institute with new ideas to improve our residents’ training.”

– Anara Simmons, MD
Associate Professor, State Medical Institute of Kyrgyzstan

“In our pluralistic society, experience in working with other cultures, languages, socio-economic groups, and ethnicities has a tremendous value developing better physicians.”

– Warren Heffron, MD

Please consider making a gift to support the Warren and Rosalee Heffron Faculty & Graduate Fellowship for International Health.

For more information, call Joanne Branyon-Ward at 505.272.8413

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