



WMS at CFD



Cowboy Medics

Family Medicine residents increase ability to care for rodeo competitors and the crowd

BY EVAN NORBY, DO, FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM DIRECTOR, CHEYENNE

PHOTO BY DR. JAMES EGGERT: UW Family Medicine Residency Program residents Kristi St. Clair, MD, left, Olivia Hutton, MD, and Kristin Graf, MD, volunteered as Cowboy Medics at Cheyenne Frontier Days Rodeo last summer.

When the University of Wyoming Family Medicine Residency programs were developed in the 1970s, two principal purposes were to increase the number of physicians practicing in the state of Wyoming, and to place these physicians broadly throughout the state. Bringing physicians to Wyoming is still an important issue, and while there are many factors that go into an individual physician's decision on where to practice, the UW Family Medicine Residency Program in Cheyenne has, for the last few years, focused on factors that it can control to better achieve these dual purposes.

One of these areas is to prepare our graduates with the tools and experiences needed to practice in Wyoming communities both big and small—especially small. As members of the community, it is beneficial for a physician to understand local culture.

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A common feature of Wyoming communities is its cowboys. As the University of Wyoming works to provide the world with more cowboys, the UW Family Medicine Residency Program in Cheyenne works to provide physicians for these cowboys.

Our residents have the opportunity to volunteer as Cowboy Medics through a partnership with the Cheyenne Frontier Days rodeo.

Cheyenne Frontier Days Medical Director Skip Ross, MD, is a past graduate of UW Family Medicine Residency. Residents in the program spend time with him during their one month rotation focusing on sports medicine. Previously, only one or two residents have been able to provide medical coverage during Cheyenne Frontier Days—if they happen to have their sports medicine rotation with Dr. Ross in the month of July when the rodeo takes place. The program's


hurdle to getting more residents a quality learning experience has been finding someone to assist Dr. Ross in this area. Enter James “Jaimin” Eggert, MD.

Dr. Eggert graduated from the UW Family Medicine Residency Program in Cheyenne in 2022 and was immediately hired as its newest faculty member. During residency, Dr. Eggert spent additional training time in the area of musculoskeletal (MSK) and sports medicine by acquiring Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS) skills, assisting UW team physician Matthew Boyer, DO, providing UW athletic event coverage, and working the rodeo with Dr. Ross. With his additional training and experience, Dr. Eggert created the means for our residency program to allow more residents to participate in Cheyenne Frontier Days.

Participate they did. Nine residents were able to provide medical coverage during the 2022 Cheyenne Frontier Days rodeo, compared to a high of two in previous years. These nine residents worked alongside paramedics, firefighters, military members, and police. They worked with medical specialists in the fields of emergency medicine, general surgery, trauma, plastic surgery, and sports medicine. Our residents

were available for medical coverage for 1,600 competitors, providing care for broad range of conditions including: laceration repairs, joint dislocations, fractures, splinting, and concussion evaluation. Medical conditions seen during bystander evaluations included: altitude sickness, dehydration, tachycardia, migraine, and viral illness.

Some of these evaluations involved the use of a portable ultrasound probe that had been provided by the UW Family Medicine Residency to aide in the diagnosis and management of various injuries.

Increasing skills and experiences needed for rural family medicine practice can serve to increase the number of residents who decide to practice in Wyoming. Continuing this pattern each year of allowing a large number of residents the experience of providing medical coverage to cowboys and their supporters during Cheyenne Frontier Days will help prepare each participating resident to care for the world's, and Wyoming's, cowboys and their communities. I am excited to see this new structure develop in the coming years and look forward to the benefit these experiences will bring to the Wyoming communities who successfully recruit them. 

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