The M.D. program at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University is innovative, patient focused, and student centered with a small class size and a highly collegial learning environment. Our Integrated Patient Focused Curriculum is based on the principle that future physicians should learn essential basic science information in the context of patient care, patient case studies, and the practice of clinical skills. In addition, experience has taught us that early interaction with patients enhances medical students’ clinical skills, preparing them to excel as soon as they begin their clinical clerkships.

**LEARNING COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

The Integrated Patient Focused Curriculum provides an interactive learning experience with a problem-based approach, an early introduction to the patient and the community, and the integration of a rigorous foundation in basic and clinical biomedical sciences with the social and behavioral aspects of medicine. Key subject matter is longitudinally and horizontally integrated throughout the curriculum, so that each new experience provides an appropriate and well-synchronized introduction to new content. Students are assigned to a Learning Community at the beginning of their medical school career, with a faculty advisor who follows them throughout the program and guides them as they develop their own personalized learning portfolios.

**PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING**

Our students learn the sciences basic to the practice of medicine using case-based, problem-based learning, with a balance of small group sessions and independent study, supplemented by lectures focusing on core concepts rather than lists of facts. With a small class size (no more than 64 students a year), close collegial relationships with other students and faculty are a hallmark of the learning environment.

**FOCUS ON PROFESSIONALISM**

The clinical curriculum occupies two to three afternoons a week starting in year one and begins with courses that focus on professionalism, cultural competency, communication and history-taking skills, making extensive use of our Simulation Center, where students learn safe and effective ways to reduce or eliminate preventable adverse events. Early experiences introduce students to a strongly encouraged culture of reflection and feedback offering an introduction to caring for patients with chronic illnesses. From the beginning of the curriculum, students develop doctor/patient relationships with a panel of patients; each student is paired with a physician preceptor in the community and spends time in their medical practice weekly throughout the first two years of medical school.

**LONGITUDINAL INTEGRATED CLERKSHIPS**

Our third-year curriculum features innovative longitudinal integrated clerkships, a new model of clinical education that integrates clinical disciplines such as surgery, internal medicine, geriatrics, emergency medicine, and critical care in a Medical & Surgical Sciences Clerkship and pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology in a Family & Community Health Sciences Clerkship. This new approach places students with a group of physicians at affiliated community hospitals for an extended period, rather than the traditional series of short, discipline-specific clerkships at various hospitals in random sequence. With longitudinal integrated clerkships, students learn within a healthcare system, mastering clinical skills and knowledge and getting to know not only the patients, but the doctors, nurses and other members of the healthcare team. Students continue to spend one half-day per week paired one-on-one with a primary care physician in the community throughout the third year of medical school. During the fourth year, our students have the opportunity to take a wide range of hospital-based and other electives in addition to the required acting internships.

**GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

The Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine’s graduate education programs combine innovation with high-tech learning tools to educate and train aspiring scientists. The college is at the forefront of basic, applied and translational biomedical research and offers a joint doctoral program with the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science in integrative biology, a master’s degree in biomedical science and a graduate certificate in biomedical science. Researchers are addressing some of the world’s most pressing health challenges including cardiovascular disease and stroke, cancer, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, macular degeneration, autoimmune diseases and HIV/AIDS.