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PCOM Essay Contest

I was always taught that the first step in fixing a problem is acknowledging that a problem exists. There is a shortage of healthcare providers in South Georgia which leaves the region largely underserved medically. For patients this means waiting days, weeks, and possibly months for doctor's appointments and travelling to other cities to receive care. To some this may not seem but a minor inconvenience, but to others it is the difference between seeing a physician or not.

The second step in solving a problem is working towards a solution. I think there are many different steps that can be taken to solve the healthcare shortage in South Georgia. My generation must be the one that steps up and answers the call to serve our region. We must become physicians, physician assistants, nurses, and other healthcare providers who are willing to commit to serving our communities long term. The satisfaction of serving our rural community must outweigh the conveniences and amenities that could be found in a big city. Who else can better serve our community than those who are from it? It is to our advantage and our community's advantage to have healthcare providers who are from our area and understand the problems and difficulties our region faces.

Another way my generation can shape the health of South Georgia is investing their time into future students and coworkers. We need to invest our time in raising a generation of healthcare providers who are equipped to meet the demands of rural medicine. The most practical way of raising students to become capable healthcare providers is to start mentorships and learning programs. Teaching students about healthcare related jobs early on will increase the

chance of students pursuing a career in medicine. Likewise, mentors are essential for guiding students down the long and difficult pathway of medicine.

My generation has grown up with technology at the tips of our fingers. I can talk on the phone, send a text message, and surf the internet at the same time. We need to use the technology around us to advance the world of healthcare. I believe technology could help us communicate with patients in rural and remote areas and bridge the gap of care that often exists there. We could use social media as a teaching platform to inform communities about general health. We could also use technology to allow us to see patients from their own home. Obviously, seeing a patient in person is preferred, but in some instances, it can be a real challenge or impossible for a patient to come for an office visit. Seeing patients via skype or a similar platform could potentially boost patient compliance and improve outcomes.

I think my generation has the potential to redefine the healthcare system of South Georgia. We can do this by committing ourselves to serving our community and investing in the next generation of healthcare providers. We need to be mentors and examples of how to serve and lead.