Loyola plays an integral role in providing specialized training for future military physicians

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Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine is playing an integral role in providing specialized training and support for medical students who are preparing to serve as physicians in the U.S. military. Loyola is the only medical school in the Chicago area to offer a targeted mentor program and lecture series twice a year that provides insight into the unique role of caring for the health needs of veterans, service members and military families.

"The structure of the military and caring for fellow soldiers and their families is very different than physicians caring for the civilian population," said Patricia McNally, Ed.D., assistant dean, medical education at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and faculty adviser for military medical students. "Just by the nature of what they are doing, whether they are serving with a deployed unit or on base, their environment, patient population and lifestyle, will be very different than their colleagues who are not in the military. We hope to help bridge that gap in their training so they are better prepared to serve the men and women of the military."

This year's lecture series will focus on a multidisciplinary approach to treating post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD has been determined as an area in critical need of education for current and future physicians.

Special guest presenter Colonel Peter G. Napolitano, MD, MC, USA, who is a Stritch grad, will use Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety (STEPPS) to help students understand their role as a military physician in team building. Department of Defense Patient Safety Program developed the Team STEPPS program to produce highly effective teams that optimize the use of information, people and resources to achieve the best outcomes for patients.

Two lectures will be offered. Nurses, doctors, social workers and other caregivers are welcome to attend a lecture on November 9. Medical school students from throughout northern Illinois have been invited to the November 10 lecture.

"Part of who we are as a medical school is to prepare our students to lead extraordinary lives and help them reach their full potential as physicians wherever they go. The students who choose to serve our country are amazing and it's our responsibility to ensure they receive the best possible training to serve the military and our country," McNally said.
In addition to the lectures, students are paired with a physician mentors who are either active in the military or retired to help answer questions and give them a perspective on their role as a military physician.

"We are very fortunate at Loyola to have a wonderful partnership with the Edward Hines, Jr. Veteran's Association Hospital as well as numerous physicians on staff who are either currently serving or have served in the military," McNally said.

Started four years ago, the program helps future military physicians better understand, diagnose and treat the needs of veterans, service members and military families.

"This is not an easy road and I have the greatest respect for these men and women who have made this choice. It is an honor to be able to serve them," McNally said.

Source: Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine