

New Student Health Center medical director all about ‘team approach’

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/29518/new-student-health-center-medical-director-all-about-team-approach/>

With 16 years of service as a primary care provider with Berlin’s Community Health Network, Dr. Shawn Ekstrom helped patients with everything from “deliveries to death.”

So, she has cared for and empowered more than a few college students in the course of her career.

“In private practice, I tended to call them ‘my girls,’” said Ekstrom, who is bringing her expertise to the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh’s Student Health Center. “And guys came in, too, but it was primarily girls... And I learned a lot of things.”

Ekstrom said she feels more than prepared to serve the students of UW Oshkosh as the Student Health Center’s new medical director, the role she assumed at the beginning of the fall semester.

“It starts at the door and it ends with the patient,” she said. “... My job is as an educator.”

Ekstrom took the campus medical director post after the May retirement of Dr. John Swanson, who had served as one of two Student Health Services doctors and its medical director since August 2001.

Like Swanson, Ekstrom enters the post with a wealth of community healthcare experience. And she is no stranger to the unique issues and challenges the health and well-being of a campus community of 13,500 students presents.

Ekstrom was a nontraditional student who graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology with an emphasis in biomedical science from Montana State University. She completed medical school at the University of Washington, School of Medicine in Seattle, WA. Ekstrom performed her residency program through the University of Wisconsin and family practice in Wausau.

For the past 16 years, she was stationed in Berlin, providing full-scope family care including comprehensive clinic practice, hospital admissions and the delivery of newborns.

Ekstrom and her family traded life on a black angus beef farm outside of Berlin for new opportunities in Oshkosh. Ekstrom now lives in Oshkosh with her husband, a football coach and teacher at Lourdes Academy, where their son attends high school. Their daughter is currently attending UW-Green Bay.

Ekstrom said she has been quickly impressed by UW Oshkosh’s concentration on student wellness.

“What has become so evident to me is how important the student is,” she said.

The Student Health Center’s mission is to “provide healthcare, education and outreach services to a

diverse student population” and “promote campus wellness, encourage healthy lifestyles and personal responsibility to enhance students’ capacity for reaching academic and personal goals.”

Empowering students to make the best decisions about their personal health and wellness is critical, she said. It’s part of the work to encourage a proactive, lifelong commitment to well-being.

“These people are adults now, and they make the decisions,” Ekstrom said.

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh Student Health Center](#)