Pedro José “Joe” Greer, Jr. joins FIU College of Medicine

Miami (May 11, 2007) – For over two decades Dr. Pedro Jose “Joe” Greer has made it his calling to bring health care to the poor and the disadvantaged. Now Greer wants to instill that calling in aspiring physicians.

Greer, recognized by U.S. Presidents and the Pope for his work with Miami’s poor, will become assistant dean of academic affairs at Florida International University’s College of Medicine.

“Dr. Greer’s well-known human touch with his patients and our College’s mission to serve the community are a perfect fit,” said Dr. John A. Rock, FIU College of Medicine dean and senior vice president for medical affairs.

Greer, 51, a gastroenterologist and hepatologist, is the founder of Camillus Health Concern, an agency that provides medical care to Miami’s homeless. Greer founded the not-for-profit after he encountered a homeless man dying from tuberculosis. This experience opened his eyes to the plight of Miami’s poor. He is also the founder of the St. John Bosco Clinic, which helps undocumented immigrants in the Miami area.

Former presidents Bill Clinton, George Bush, Sr. and Jimmy Carter have recognized him with the Presidential Service Award. He has received three Papal Medals and is the recipient of the prestigious MacArthur “genius grant.” Greer has been featured on ABC, CBS, NBC, and HBO, among other media.
“Waking Up in America: How One Doctor Brings Hope to Those Who Need it Most,” his autobiography, co-written with FIU alumna and Pulitzer prize winning journalist Liz Balmaseda, details his early years as a physician, delivering care to patients living under highway overpasses in Miami.

Greer said FIU’s role as a public institution in Miami-Dade County puts it in a strategic position in medical education because of the area’s ethnic and socio-economic diversity.

“Miami is the greatest classroom,” he said. “Here we can take the best and brightest and turn them into the best and brightest, not just into run-of-the-mill doctors.”

Greer was born in Miami in 1956 when his mother traveled here for a family gathering. After the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the family settled in Miami. Greer graduated from Christopher Columbus High School and attended the University of Florida, where he graduated in 1978. He earned his medical degree at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra in the Dominican Republic. He did his residency at Jackson Memorial Hospital from 1985 through 1987 and completed there specialties in gastroenterology and hepatology.

Greer currently has a joint private practice with his father Pedro Greer, Sr. His appointment at FIU becomes effective on July 1. Greer said he looks forward to helping implement a community-oriented approach to health care at FIU and to work with medical students early in their training.

“I want FIU to set the pace in medical education,” Greer said.

Greer is married with two college-age children. He lives in Coral Gables with his wife Janus.

The College of Medicine was approved in 2006 by the Florida Board of Governors and the Florida Legislature. Officials hope to start classes in 2009, pending provisional accreditation by the Liason Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

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