

Merced FHC Hires First U.S. Educated Hmong MD

Dr. Long Thao, the first Hmong medical doctor to graduate from U.S. schools, and one of three Hmong doctors in the United States, did his residency in Merced and has recently become the medical manager of Merced Family Health Center's West Modesto Medical Clinic.

Thao, 30, came to the United States in 1976, among the first refugees to leave the Laotian capital of Vientiane at the end of the Vietnam war in order to escape being persecuted by the victorious communists.

When Thao arrived in Ottawa, Illinois, he had never spoken a word of English. His Thai-English dictionary became his closest companion. Even struggling with the language, he graduated 10th in a class of about 400. The studying since those early difficult days has been almost non-stop.

He chose to do his residency in Merced because it is home to more than 8,000 Hmong, plus other Southeast Asian refugees. Thao speaks Hmong, Lao, Thai and English fluently and some French.

His commitment and popularity has, in many ways, backfired on him. He often receives calls from Fresno, Wisconsin or Minnesota - Hmong patients wanting second opinions from someone they feel they can trust.



Dr. Long Thao

Although Thao's family long ago abandoned the traditional Hmong beliefs in shamanism, he understands when patients come in and say that their soul has wandered or that they are ill because an ancestor wants something.

"I tell them I know that, but we still have to do the test," he said. "Usually, I don't meet with a lot of resistance."

The health center movement is proud to welcome Dr. Long Thao to the family. Congratulations on the completion of your residency and your new position!

University Of Missouri Announces 1992 Managed Care Program

The University of Missouri at Kansas City has announced the opening of their Fifth Executive Program in Managed Care to begin February 9, 1992. This nationally acclaimed program will feature hands-on experience and advanced instruction from industry leaders and respected academicians. The 250 hour program is conducted over a five-month period. The Executive Program is designed to meet the needs of a variety of people concerned with the future of prepaid medical delivery systems. Participants are typically seasoned executives from a broad range of organizations including well-known national and regional health care systems. One of the program's most popular aspects is the chance to exchange ideas with people from other industry backgrounds and cultures, such as: senior managers of HMOs and PPOs; physicians and medical directors; managers of hospitals, clinics and other health care organizations; and insurance executives. For further information, contact the National Center for Managed Health Care Administration, 5100 Rockhill Road, Kansas City, MO 64110-2499 or call (816) 235-1478.