

Potential Questions Regarding the Medical School Initiative

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DRAFT

General Questions

Who is responsible for the initiative to create a medical school in Kalamazoo?

This is a collaborative effort of Western Michigan University, the Bronson HealthCare Group, and Borgess Health. The initiative began when the President of Western Michigan University, Dr. John Dunn, challenged the community to assess critically the potential to create a new medical school in Kalamazoo. It is anticipated that this will be a private medical school, which means that it will not be supported by state tax dollars.

Why do we need more medical schools?

Studies by the American Association of Medical Colleges have suggested that the United States needs to increase the number of medical school graduates by 30% by 2015. Existing medical schools are unable to increase their enrollment sufficiently to meet this need. Consequently, new schools are required. Most importantly, this initiative allows Western Michigan University, in concert with the Bronson HealthCare Group, and Borgess Health, to help address a national need to train additional physicians--a chance to give back to our state and our country.

Why do we have a physician shortage?

Several factors contribute to this. The population is increasing, and living longer thereby increasing the need for physicians. Also, approximately 35% of currently practicing physicians are older than age 55. In fact, 17% of practicing physicians are older than 65 indicating that as many as 35% of current physicians could retire over the next 10 years. In addition, a growing number of physicians are choosing to have greater balance in their lives between work and family, and choose not to work 60+ hours a week. Consequently, an increase in the population, Americans living longer, the impending retirement of a large segment of currently practicing physicians, and hours worked are the major factors contributing to the need for more physicians in the United States.

Michigan already has three medical schools, why do we need another one?

Medical schools are powerful engines of economic growth, and they bring a more sophisticated level of health care to our residents. New medical schools will be formed. The question is whether or not Michigan wants to participate. Consider some states similar to Michigan—Ohio has 7 medical schools and Illinois has 6 medical schools.

At least two other universities in Michigan have launched or are considering new medical schools. Have you factored in that level of competition? How competitive can we be in an environment that includes five other Michigan medical schools?

We shouldn't think about this as a competition within Michigan. This is short sighted. We are planning a private medical school, which means we can recruit students from around the country. Bringing talented individuals to Michigan, some of whom will stay here to pursue further training, and to practice here, is the way we should look at this. Michigan will be stronger if we have six medical schools importing talent and attracting research funding. Remember, Illinois has six medical schools and Ohio has seven. Our competition is national, and if a medical school is formed in Southwest Michigan, it will be competitive.

Are there enough qualified students to support another medical school?

Yes. A private medical school can recruit students nationally. Analysis of the results of the medical college admission test and the low acceptance rate of existing medical schools makes us very confident that there are more qualified applicants than the current schools can accept.

When do you anticipate admitting the first class?

It's premature to talk about admitting the first class until we have obtained the necessary funding to launch a medical school. Remember, it's more important to do it right than to do it fast. This is a complex task and it will require the help of many. Other new schools have taken 2-3 years to admit a first class after having obtained initial funding commitments.

The Larned & Weinberg report suggests the need to search for a Founding Dean. Is that something that is under way or something that is a next step?

Recruitment of a Founding Dean is a critical early step in the formation of a medical school. However, this search cannot be undertaken until appropriate funding is obtained, and we do not yet know if this is even possible. The next phase of planning is intended to lead to this determination. A substantial level of funding will need to be secured in order to attract someone of national prominence to lead this effort as Dean. In the mean time, we will call upon talented individuals within the University, Bronson and Borgess to lead us in this effort.

How do medical schools work? What are the basic elements of medical education and what will be the focus of the Kalamazoo school?

Medical education is a long process. Typically, students spend 4 years in college taking several required classes in biology, chemistry, and physics in addition to

all of the other graduation requirements of their college. This is oftentimes referred to as “pre-med”, and students receive undergraduate degrees in a variety of disciplines (e.g., biology, chemistry, biomedical engineering, and increasingly other disciplines such as mathematics or psychology or others). If they are accepted to medical school, which is a very competitive process, they then spend 4 more years in medical school. The first two years of medical school focus on additional scientific training in such things as anatomy, physiology, pharmacology and general topics in medicine related to disease. The second two years of medical school, usually referred to as clinical clerkships, involve instruction in direct patient care experience in hospitals and outpatient facilities. After graduating from medical school, students receive a M.D., or Doctor of Medicine degree. At this point, they progress to what is known as Graduate Medical Education where they spend 3-4 years of additional clinical training in Residency programs such as Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Practice, General Surgery, Radiology, etc. After completing a Residency program, many physicians enter active medical practice, while others pursue additional training (2-5 years) in so called sub-specialties or fellowships such as cardiology, oncology, cardiovascular surgery, endocrinology and many others. Taken together, the three phases of medical education (e.g., pre-med, medical school and graduate medical education) result in physicians spending between 11-15 years preparing to practice medicine, with the longer amount of time being for those who pursue subspecialty training.

What other "next steps" does the Larned & Weinberg report suggest for the near term?

Creating a medical school is a very detailed and complicated process that ultimately requires many steps and the involvement of a large number of individuals. The near-term efforts of the Partners in this effort (e.g., Borgess Health, Bronson HealthCare Group, and Western Michigan University) will be to address the *core* issues required to make a final decision regarding the viability of creating a school of medicine. It is anticipated that various committees will be utilized in this process. If appropriate funding is ultimately obtained, it will then be necessary to initiate planning across a much broader area of issues.

How big will this school be if it is formed?

The exact size of the school has not been determined. Most new medical schools begin with between 40 – 100 students per class. The average class size for the current medical schools in the United States is 140 with a range of 50 (Mayo Medical School) to 308 (Indiana University). (*data from the American Association of Medical Colleges, 2007*).

What will be the name of this medical school?

No decisions have been made regarding a name. In fact, until appropriate funding is secured, this discussion is premature.

Isn't this bad timing to try to create a medical school in the midst of a national financial crisis?

There is a window of opportunity to participate in the national effort to increase the number of medical schools. Other states are aggressively pursuing new schools so the need for additional new schools will disappear in the near future. If we don't act now, we will lose the opportunity.

Where can I go for more information?

A website has been established to provide information and updates for the local medical school project (see <http://www.kzoomedschool.org>).

Finance Questions

How much will a medical school cost?

At this time, we do not have a firm figure regarding the cost of a medical school. The cost obviously depends on the size of the school, the facility needs, and many other details that are under review. Our Planning Committee and its Finance Subcommittee will work to define what will be required to create a viable and sustainable financial model.

How will you pay for a medical school?

Medical Schools are funded from multiple sources. As this will be a private medical school, it will not receive ongoing state funding like Michigan's state supported universities. Our Planning Committee and its Finance Subcommittee will work to define what will be required to create a viable and sustainable financial model.

Facility Questions

Where would this new medical school be located?

No decisions have been made regarding location. Various options will be considered as we go through the planning process. A medical school has several components and it is likely that there will ultimately be some presence on the campus of all three of the partner organizations (e.g., Borgess Health, Bronson HealthCare Group, Western Michigan University).

Would a new medical school build another hospital in Kalamazoo?

No. This is a collaborative effort between Western Michigan University, the Bronson HealthCare Group, and Borgess Health. The community already has two excellent hospitals, and there is no intent to create a third.

Community Related Questions

How does the Community benefit from a new medical school?

A medical school provides infrastructure that helps provide the latest in modern healthcare to our residents, the latest treatment options. A medical school helps provide a strong medical base even as the technology changes rapidly over time. In addition, medical schools are powerful engines for local economic growth and job creation.

How many new jobs will result from a new medical school?

We do not have an exact estimate on this. However we know from multiple economic impact studies that have been conducted nationally, both for existing and planned schools, that the total economic impact to the community can ultimately be very substantial. The impact goes beyond the medical school itself, and is multiplied across the local economy by all the goods and services purchased including enhanced tax revenues.

Western Michigan University Related Questions

Why does Western Michigan University need a medical school? How does a new medical school help Western Michigan University?

Importantly, remember that the medical school is a collaborative effort of Western Michigan University, Bronson HealthCare Group, and Borgess Health. It's not just the university. However, the University can benefit in several ways. Most importantly, it allows the University, in concert with Bronson and Borgess, to help address a national need to train additional physicians- a chance to give back to our country. A medical school could:

- Increase enrollment in the university's undergraduate (pre-med) programs
- Provide additional opportunities for research funding and collaborative research
- Enhance existing health related programs by adding physician expertise to programs in the College of Health and Human Services
- Provide the opportunity for combined degree programs (M.D.-PhD, M.D.-MBA) and other new programs that benefit from medical involvement
- Enhance existing research collaborations that already exist between WMU and the hospitals

- Strengthen the core academic infrastructure of WMU thereby enhancing the national reputation of the University

Faculty Related Questions

How many new faculty members will be hired?

This is something that will be evaluated carefully as we proceed through the planning process. The intent is to maximize the use of existing talent and augment where it is necessary. The exact number of new hires is under review. However, in the long run a vibrant medical school should produce a substantial number of new jobs.

Community Physician Related Questions

To be developed

Accreditation Questions

To be developed

Curriculum Questions

To be developed

Patient Related Questions

To be developed

Miscellaneous Questions

To be developed