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Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine welcomes first class

Michigan's first new medical school in 47 years offers an innovative medical learning community for future doctors

Rochester, Mich. – The Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, Michigan's first new M.D.-granting (allopathic) medical school in 47 years, welcomed its inaugural class of 50 students on Aug. 8.

More than 3,200 students applied for the 50 positions in the school's first class. Of those admitted, 70 percent are Michigan residents; 46 percent are women; and 15 students from eight other states from the east to the west coast have moved to Michigan to attend the new medical school.

Many were attracted by the school's innovative approach to medical education. Unlike traditional medical schools, the OUWB curriculum combines basic science instruction with clinical training (where students interact with patients) across all four years, with a focus on team-based, participatory learning in small groups. The school's curriculum also highlights promotion and maintenance of health, not just diagnosis and treatment of disease.

"We have created a medical learning community where students are not just students – they are our learning partners," says Robert Folberg, M.D., founding dean of the school. "While our students are learning medicine for the first time, our faculty members will be renewing their knowledge and study of medicine."

Student wellness, mentoring and community outreach opportunities are also key components of the school. All students are paired with a Beaumont physician mentor to guide and look after their physical and mental wellness, and to teach them to be healthy role models for patients.

Students will also participate in four-year Capstone projects addressing issues of scientific or social impact in health education, research or community service. These projects will help them find an area of medicine that matches their talents and interests, while meeting community needs and helping them grow roots within the community.

"Our focus is on educating the type of physician that you would want to care for you and your family – one who is a master of the science of health care delivery – achieving the best patient outcomes at the highest value – but also kind, compassionate, culturally aware and an effective communicator," says Dr. Folberg.

Oakland University and Beaumont Health System began the process of creating the medical school in January 2007. The Oakland and Beaumont Boards approved funding for the school in July 2008. The Liaison Committee on Medical Education granted preliminary accreditation to the school in February 2010.

Students will receive instruction in basic sciences and research at School of Medicine facilities in O'Dowd Hall on Oakland's campus in Rochester.

They will receive clinical training exclusively at Beaumont facilities. More than 1,400 Beaumont doctors have School of Medicine faculty appointments.

The medical school is one of just a few in the country where students will complete all their clinical training within one integrated health care system, offering them an array of patient care experiences through Beaumont's tertiary care and community hospitals, community-based medical centers and practices, nursing homes, home care and hospice.

"This is an important milestone in the history of Oakland University, for our county and for our state," says Gary D. Russi, president, Oakland University.

"The school will help reverse the exodus of talent in Michigan. It has already attracted faculty from five states and students from eight states to come to Michigan. It will also serve as a magnet for bio-medical research investments and businesses, leading to job creation."

A study commissioned by the Association of American Medical Colleges estimated the economic impact of Michigan's medical schools to be \$24.2 billion in 2008, and nearly 160,000 jobs in our state were directly or indirectly attributable to medical schools or teaching hospitals.

The new school will also address the predicted shortage of more than 4,000 physicians in Michigan in the next 10 years, while enhancing quality of medical care.

"One-third of Beaumont's physicians are approaching retirement age," says Gene Michalski, president and CEO, Beaumont Health System. "The school will help to replenish and expand our state's supply of physicians to meet the needs of our aging population. At the same time, it will help elevate quality of care by attracting renowned medical faculty who want to teach, as well as be involved in patient care and research."

Operation of the private medical school is supported with revenue from tuition, commercialization of intellectual property, partner contributions, research grants and philanthropy.

From the initial class of 50 students, plans call for School of Medicine classes to grow by 25 students each year, plateauing at 125 students. This means that 75 students will be admitted in 2012, 100 in 2013, 125 in 2014, up to a full complement of 500 total students by 2017.

To accommodate the school's growth, both Oakland and Beaumont have conceptual plans to build medical school buildings on their campuses.

For more information on the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, visit www.oakland.edu/medicine.