

FACTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED MD SCHOOL AT UNT HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

The Need: Texas has requested the expansion of medical education training to meet current and projected physician shortages. In response, UNT Health Science Center (UNTHSC) has already grown its existing medical class at Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM) from 115 in the Class of 2005 to 220 in the Class of 2014. Our challenge is to ensure TCOM continues to be a leader in the education of family and rural practitioners without having entering medical class sizes exceed best practices for a quality education. Our recently constructed facilities are designed to handle larger medical classes and we are committed to expanding in order to provide more doctors of all types.

The Proposal: UNTHSC proposes to add a fifth school to its campus; one that will offer the MD degree. We propose to enroll not more than 100 MD students in fiscal year 2014 after accreditation and planning are complete. We have committed to build upon and support the continued development and success of the other four existing colleges at UNTHSC, including: Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (TCOM), Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Public Health, and School of Health Professions.

Cost and Local Donations: Over the past two years, UNTHSC has conducted extensive fiscal and academic planning to determine how our existing infrastructure could support two separately accredited medical programs at one location. With this unique sharing opportunity, the comprehensive business and academic plan estimates the initial costs for starting the new MD program will total \$21.5 million over five years. Our Board of Regents gave us the challenge to raise these funds privately and we are very proud that we have successfully obtained firm local pledges of financial support for \$25 million to cover the initial, incremental, and all start-up costs. After five years, the only cost to the State of Texas will be the usual and appropriate costs associated with additional Texas medical students. This innovative private-public proposal is particularly of interest in difficult financial times as it will benefit the state without incurring start-up costs.

Benefit: UNTHSC wants to enable as many of its graduates as possible to remain in Texas for their medical practice. Fort Worth area hospitals have indicated an enthusiasm for partnering with UNTHSC to bring both MD and DO students and faculty onto their hospital campuses for undergraduate medical education. This will allow hospitals to expand their resource commitments to graduate medical education, which is the area that will help attract and keep the most new doctors in Texas, expanding access to care. We have written partnership agreements (as well as financial pledges) from Texas Health Resources, Tarrant County Hospital District, Baylor Health System, HCA North Texas/Plaza Medical Center, and Cook Children's Health System.

Next steps: Years ago, language was adopted in the UNTHSC authorizing statute preventing the issuance of an MD degree by the UNT System in Fort Worth. This is the only medical school in Texas with a degree restriction of any kind. We intend to ask the Texas Legislature to remove this restriction and authorize the formation of an MD degree-granting medical school at UNTHSC. We will then work with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) to accomplish full accreditation of the new program.

For more information, contact: Jean Tips, 817-735-5031; Gary Grant, 917-735-5126; or Danny Jensen, 817-735-2500.