

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.



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WHA Praises Grant Program Addressing Wisconsin Physician Shortage

Estimated 133 additional physicians enrolled in WI-based residency programs by July 2020

MADISON (May 11, 2018) - As the population ages and demand for health care continues to grow, new data from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) shows Wisconsin's Graduate Medical Education (GME) Program is gaining traction in heading off a projected Wisconsin primary care physician shortage.

By 2030, Wisconsin's population over the age of 65 is expected to double, increasing demand for primary care physician services. At the same time, almost 400 physicians per year leave the practice of medicine or reduce their hours in preparation for retirement. A 2011 study by the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) predicted a shortfall in Wisconsin of over 2,000 physicians by 2030 and recommended increasing Wisconsin-based physician post-graduate training programs (GME) to help address the gap.

Today, a \$13 million grant program championed by WHA and enacted with bipartisan support from Gov. Scott Walker and the Legislature has led to the creation of 10 new Wisconsin GME programs and the expansion of nine existing programs. Hospitals provide dollar-for-dollar matching funding for the program and as a result, more primary care physicians will be ready to practice in Wisconsin this spring, and estimates show there will be up to 133 additional physicians enrolled in Wisconsin-based residency programs by July 2020.

WHA worked with the Legislature to secure additional funding for the program, which is proving a successful part of Wisconsin's "grow our own" strategy of training more physicians who will practice in Wisconsin.

"It is rewarding to see the GME grant program, a public-private partnership crafted between Wisconsin hospitals and state policymakers, moving forward toward fulfillment of our mutual objectives of expanding the number of primary care physicians, psychiatrists and other needed physicians in Wisconsin," said Eric Borgerding, WHA president and CEO.

The same 2011 WHA study also predicted that if a medical student is from Wisconsin, attends medical school in Wisconsin and completes residency (GME) training in Wisconsin, there is an 86 percent chance they will practice medicine in Wisconsin.

“The bottom line is more medical students completing their graduate training in Wisconsin means more physicians practicing in Wisconsin, and in critically needed specialties,” Borgerding said. “These matching grants are a textbook example of identifying a problem and then working with hospitals, health systems, medical schools, physician leaders, state agencies and elected officials to craft solutions.”

Since the inception of the DHS GME grant program in 2013, three-year grants were awarded to support development of new GME programs at:

- Ascension St. Michael’s Hospital, Stevens Point – Family Medicine
- Health Sisters Health System (HSBS) St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center, Green Bay – Family Medicine
- The Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee – Addiction Psychiatry Fellowship
- Gundersen Medical Foundation, La Crosse – Family Medicine
- Monroe Clinic, Monroe – Family Medicine
- The Medical College of Wisconsin, Wausau/Central Wisconsin – Psychiatry
- The Medical College of Wisconsin, Green Bay/Northeast Wisconsin – Psychiatry
- University of Wisconsin, Madison – General Surgery
- Mayo Clinic Health System, Northwest Wisconsin - Family Medicine
- Health Partners, St. Croix Valley – Family Medicine

Existing accredited GME programs receiving new funding for new resident positions for the length of the residency are:

- Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center Family Medicine Resident Training Program
- SSM Health Monroe Clinic Hospital Rural Family Medicine Resident Training Program
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program
- University of Wisconsin-Madison Psychiatry Resident Training Program (initial & continuation grants)
- St. Mary’s Hospital/University of Wisconsin Family Medicine Resident Training Program
- ThedaCare Regional Medical Center/The Medical College of Wisconsin, Fox Valley Family Medicine Training Program (initial and continuation grants)
- Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center General Surgery Resident Training Program
- University of Wisconsin-Madison General Surgery Resident Training Program
- The Medical College of Wisconsin General Surgery Resident Training Program

For additional information about the DHS GME Grant Program, contact Ann Zenk, WHA vice president, workforce and clinical practice, at azenk@wha.org.

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