

Division of Medical Education Report

MISSION: The mission of the Division of Medical Education is to provide an educational vehicle for physician manpower needs in Wyoming. At the undergraduate level, premedical students are prepared for participation in the WWAMI consortium as well as the participating WICHE schools. WWAMI Medical students obtain a rich experience in rural medicine in preparation for rural Wyoming practice. The two Family Medicine Residencies prepare beginning doctors to enter primary care practices in the state. Additionally, each program cares for the underserved and uninsured residents of their respective counties while also providing teaching opportunities for students in Nursing, Pharmacy, and Social Work.

ASPIRATIONS: WWAMI class size has increased from 10 students to the current level of 16. Creation of the Future 3 suggests examining the current eligibility criteria for WWAMI admission in order to broaden and deepen the applicant pool while researching the possibility of class expansion.

The Family Medicine Residencies are dedicated to strengthening their position in the resident selection process. They aspire to become preeminent educational programs, while becoming sought after centers for continuing Medical Education. They plan to extend their outreach beyond the borders of Laramie and Natrona Counties by providing educational relief for impacted primary care physicians. Additionally, through their affiliation with the WWAMI Family Practice Network, they will continue to develop faculty skills which will aid in attracting WWAMI students to their programs. The growth of the Cheyenne program justifies planning for resident expansion.

PREVIOUS PLANNING ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Resident and faculty salaries are more in line with peer groups. The Family Medicine Residencies are part of the WWAMI Family Practice Network. The University Loan repayment account is being utilized to lighten the financial burden on current WWAMI students while developing criteria to assist WWAMI or Family Medicine Physicians in returning to or locating in Wyoming. The office of the Director of Medical Education and Public Health has been created to oversee the educational programs and interface with the Dean's Office and Academic Affairs.

RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: Applications to Medical School from Wyoming have remained constant for several years. The number of High School graduates is shrinking. The average physician age in Wyoming is 55. Many communities are isolated, and of insufficient size to recruit and retain several physicians. Business costs including professional liability premiums are higher than in surrounding States. All of the above affect the pipeline into Medicine.

The Family Medicine Residencies have their own issues. In Cheyenne it is keeping up the community's needs to serve the underserved while filling the unmet need by the private practices for private primary care. The number of clinic visits continues to rise each year. This warrants careful study into the feasibility of expanding the Residency from 6 residents per year to 8. In Casper there is a need to broaden the faculty base. The current agreement between the University's Family Medicine program and the Community Health Center of Central Wyoming is in the process of being redefined. Accomplishing this task will have bearing on the future relationship between the entities.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. **Expand the premedical student pipeline.** Working with the Dean of the College of Health Sciences, the WWAMI Faculty, and the preprofessional Advisors, the Director of Medical Education has established a task force to work with the High Schools, and Community Colleges to identify and cultivate students interested in careers in medicine. The task force is revisiting recommended courses of study for premedical students. In addition the WWAMI faculty and Director will assist the Advisors in student advising. **TIMELINE:** Indefinite
2. **Improve MCAT test scores:** The Dean of the College of Health Sciences working with the Director of Medical Education, the WWAMI Faculty and the Preprofessional Advising Office will establish and offer an annual MCAT prep course in the spring of each year. A course director has been hired. Results will be analyzed on an annual basis, and the course will be tweaked as necessary to insure quality instruction. **TIMELINE:** Ongoing.

3. Assisting WWAMI students/Recruiting Physicians: Working with the Provost, the Vice President for Administration, the WWAMI Director, and the Residency Directors, the Dean of the College of Health Sciences and the Director of Medical Education have developed strategies to lighten the economic burden on WWAMI students. Simultaneously, they are exploring and implementing means to assist WWAMI graduates to come to the Family Medicine Residencies in State, and to aid both WWAMI graduate physicians and residents of the Centers to establish practice in Wyoming. TIMELINE: Ongoing.
4. Obtain a new affiliation agreement with the Community Health Center in Casper: For a number of months and with multiple rewrites the Provost, the Vice President for Finance, the Dean of the College of Health Sciences, and the Medical Director have worked in concert with representatives of the Community Health Center in Casper's Board of Directors to craft a new affiliation agreement which shares fiscal responsibility and governance. The parties agree to continue to work toward satisfactory completion of the agreement. TIMELINE: Unknown
5. Expand the Cheyenne Residency to eight residents each year: The impressive increase in the number of clinical visits supported by faculty expansion at the Cheyenne Family Medicine Residency has created conditions which will support expanding the residency level from 6 to 8 per year to a total of 24 residents. The Dean of the College of Health Sciences, the Director of Medical Education, and the Director of the Cheyenne program will work with the Provost, The Vice President for Government, and the Vice President for Finance to seek funding in the next biennium to effect this expansion. TIMELINE: 6-8 years.

6. Provide educational and mental health relief for impacted rural physicians: With support from the Wyoming Medical Society, the Governor's Health Representative, the Wyoming Department of Public Health, and the Directors of both Family Medicine Residencies, the Wyoming AHEC Director and the Director of Medical Education have developed programs to retain and hopefully recruit physicians to impacted areas by offering local mental health support. A similar program will provide practice coverage utilizing Family Medicine Faculty and Residents to provide opportunities for isolated physicians to obtain educational and emotional relief from the stresses of their practices. In order to activate these programs the Vice President for Government, the Vice President for Finance, and the Provost will have to assist in the acquisition of funding sources. TIMELINE: 2 years