

MSU West Michigan Medical School Proof of Concept

Following many months of study and deliberation and building upon the efforts of over 60 volunteers, the stakeholders have determined that the framework for a MSU West Michigan Medical School presented in this document is feasible and greatly benefits both West Michigan and Michigan State University.

West Michigan is committed to creating a strong niche in biomedical and life sciences research, healthcare and commerce. West Michigan is a burgeoning regional health center. It hosts the Van Andel Institute, is a center for health-related academics and is building a focus of biomedical and life sciences commercial activity. However, it is one of the largest metropolitan areas without a medical school. Community leaders have determined that to become a center of translation research, West Michigan must add a medical school to the community.

Michigan State University is committed to building a medical school that is nationally emulated for its innovative research and educational capabilities. West Michigan offers a community with a population adequate to support clinical studies and a track record of collaboration, a willingness to invest in the future, a vision and a strategic plan for economic growth, and high quality medical practice standards. This framework enables both West Michigan and Michigan State University to achieve their objectives by building, in partnership, an accredited 4-year medical school in West Michigan.

The leaders and “stakeholders” are Michigan State University, Spectrum Health, Saint Mary’s Health Care, Van Andel Institute, Grand Valley State University, Grand Action and The Right Place, Inc. The stakeholders believe that a medical school will benefit West Michigan by improving healthcare training and education, patient care and the economy.

Improve patient care by:

1. Creating a seamless research and healthcare continuum that quickly translates cutting edge biomedical discoveries into improved diagnostic tools, technology and treatments needed by health systems, the physicians and their patients.
2. Recruiting world-class clinicians and faculty to the community by increasing clinical, research and teaching opportunities in West Michigan.
3. Recruiting excellent medical students to West Michigan to eventually fill local residency programs and become part of the West Michigan healthcare and research workplace.

4. Collaboration of the medical school with other health professional medical education programs in West Michigan to assure the continued availability of high quality allied health professions.
5. Developing West Michigan as a healthcare destination thereby increasing the West Michigan patient base needed for important clinical research and sub-specialty programs.
6. Enabling firm linkages within West Michigan to allow a central coordinating focus for the alignment of medical practice across the Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland triplex to increase clinical sophistication and improve quality of care.

Improve the economy by:

1. Providing a necessary component for the development of a fully integrated, competitive life sciences center.
2. Furthering the development of West Michigan as a healthcare destination, thereby capturing healthcare dollars from outside the region and furthering economic development within the healthcare marketplace.
3. Attracting new research dollars from the federal government and other grantors through the partnering of the academic, research and clinical centers, thereby presenting grant-makers with a more pragmatic collaborative multi-disciplinary, multi-specialty approach to research.
4. Developing intellectual capital and incubating and attracting new business ventures in life sciences and biotechnology to enhance West Michigan's place within the knowledge economy and to replace eroding manufacturing jobs.
5. Responding to Michigan's anticipated future physician shortage, geographic imbalances, and retention issues by assuring the continued availability of state of the art healthcare services.

Improve medical education by:

1. Creating the medical school curriculum for the future based on an integrated four-year basic science, molecular, clinical and research education and experience
2. Including rigorous training in biomedical science as a formal part of medical student curriculum and post-graduate medical training programs for physician-scientists.

3. Enhancing the graduate medical education programs available in West Michigan and enriching the experience of VAI postdoctoral fellows through the additional training available in the medical school environment.
4. Including subspecialty fellowship programs that will, in turn, strengthen subspecialty clinical programs and provide a supply of well-trained physicians to meet future recruitment needs.
5. Strengthening the West Michigan Science and Technology Initiative and the health and science education programs offered in West Michigan.

The vision for the MSU West Michigan Medical School includes six facets:

1. The MSU West Michigan Medical School, in collaboration with its West Michigan partners, will establish new focused research clusters to rapidly translate biomedical discoveries into diagnosis and treatments that improve human health.
 - The clusters will be cross-discipline and cross-organizational.
 - Five areas of research (cancer initially) will be pursued: cancer, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, arthritis, and neurobiology. These choices are based on research strengths in West Michigan and MSU, and reflect national needs for research.
 - The specific research clusters will involve 12-20 researchers, including 5-7 basic scientists, 4-6 clinical physician scientists, and 3-5 population-based scientists, statistician/epidemiologists.
2. The MSU West Michigan Medical School will be the keystone for the development of West Michigan as a center for life science commercialization.
 - The physician-researchers attached to the medical school will assist in the translation of basic research to discoveries that can be tested in a clinical setting.
 - The medical school will trigger the creation of a community initiative focused on organizing current and future resources to accelerate the commercialization of available intellectual property in West Michigan, regardless of origin.
3. The MSU West Michigan Medical School will create an innovative molecular medicine curriculum with an integrated four year basic science, clinical and research education that meets and surpasses accreditation standards.
 - The MSU West Michigan Medical School will provide accredited medical education build around and fully integrated with a research enterprise and based in evidence-based molecular medicine.

- The MSU West Michigan Medical School will attract and likely be populated by students with a specific interest in scientific research, those with the intention to enter into specialty internships and residencies and those desiring placement in West Michigan.
 - The MSU West Michigan Medical School cannot succeed without the support of the local physician community and will draw from the local community to meet the instructional needs.
4. Grand Rapids will become the center of molecular medicine research and education for the MSU College of Human Medicine and home to the Dean's office.
- Full four year medical school with the substantial investment in research that accompanies the first year curriculum and faculty.
 - Dean's office will be in Grand Rapids upon completion of the medical school building.
 - West Michigan will be able, in recruiting and otherwise, to claim the Medical School as its own.
5. While an important and integral part of the community, the MSU West Michigan Medical School will have a substantial and distinct identity and physical presence in Grand Rapids.
- The MSU West Michigan Medical School will have a dedicated building, including teaching laboratories, classrooms, offices, student study and gathering areas and other amenities contained within a state-of-the-art academic medicine center.
 - Total square footage required varies from 112,000 to 182,000 depending upon whether research space is required within the facility.
 - Will ideally be downtown and easily accessible to and from the Van Andel Institute, Spectrum Health and Saint Mary's.
6. The MSU West Michigan Medical School will be financially secure.
- Financial security is important for both the integrity of the project and accreditation.
 - It will require substantial commitments from Michigan State and long term contracts from the West Michigan collaborators.
 - A state of the art building would be constructed; the cost of at least half of which would need to be raised in the joint Grand Action/MSU Capital Campaign

Implementation of the framework will require development and completion of a series of contractual arrangements between Michigan State and its West Michigan partners. Upon completion of the contracts, the fundraising related to the construction of the MSU West Michigan Medical School facility will begin.

The stakeholders desire to promote the economic health and vitality of West Michigan through the creation of an innovative medical education and research enterprise. The end result is a stronger biomedical and life sciences environment. The concept framework represents a unique multi-party collaboration. Quoting Rich DeVos: “West Michigan can use a medical school and Michigan State needs a home for its medical school expansion – together we can serve the community in a better way.”