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## OUR OPINION

### Good medicine for our region

April 21, 2011

Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo last month received a \$100 million donation to launch a private medical school.

Here, the Indiana University School of Medicine-South Bend recently completed expansion of its medical school/research complex.

The well-being of our entire region is bolstered by these two developments.

One potential advantage is that physicians tend to stay where they train. Just as importantly, communities draw on the medical schools' expertise and patients benefit when students are involved in the local network of care.

The new \$20 million Harper Hall on Notre Dame Avenue was funded equally by the state of Indiana and the family foundation of Charles "Mike" Harper of Omaha, Neb., retired chair and CEO of ConAgra Foods and RJR Nabisco. It complements the adjacent Raclin-Carmichael Hall on the IU med school campus in South Bend, providing spacious laboratories for cancer research involving both University of Notre Dame and IU scientists. The collaboration, it's hoped, will speed results and could eventually lead to area residents having more access to cancer clinical trials.

The program already has created jobs, and the number of employees on the South Bend campus is expected to increase by 80 in the next two years.

Kalamazoo's two major hospitals are looking forward to collaboration with WMU's med school which could open as soon as 2013.

The donation that makes it possible, one of the 10 largest to a university in U.S. history, builds on a precedent for philanthropy in Kalamazoo established in 2005. An anonymous donor at that time funded the Kalamazoo Promise, which provides college scholarships for public school graduates. Soon, those students who want to pursue careers in medicine will have even more doors open for them within their own city.

We congratulate Western, IU and Notre Dame for advancing efforts that not only grow their reputations as

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