Kalamazoo County Medical Examiner named founding chair of pathology at WMU School of Medicine

KALAMAZOO, MI - Kalamazoo County's medical examiner has been named the founding chair of the Western Michigan University School of Medicine's Department of Pathology.

Dr. Joyce deJong's appointment will be effective July 1, WMU announced.

At WMU School of Medicine, deJong will be responsible for overseeing the pathology education of the medical students and developing a medical examiner program for Southwest Michigan.

"We are fortunate to have Dr. deJong join us in this key leadership position. She is a well-known and highly respected forensic pathologist who also brings passion and experience in teaching medical students," said Dr. Hal Jenson, dean of the WMU School of Medicine. "Adding forensic pathology in Kalamazoo complements the expertise of the anatomic and clinical pathologists at Borgess and Bronson, who have been involved in teaching MSU medical students and will now be involved in teaching students in the new medical school. This breadth of expertise provides a great cadre of pathology teaching faculty for a new medical school department."

DeJong will transition over the next year from her role as the medical director of forensic pathology at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing and will participate in developing the curriculum in preparation for the School of Medicine's first students in August 2014, Jenson said.

Western Michigan University School of Medicine is a collaboration between Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo's two teaching hospitals, Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare. The nonprofit has been in the planning stages since 2008 and received an anonymous gift of $100 million in 2011. The medical school was granted preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education in October 2012. Construction is currently underway in downtown Kalamazoo.

DeJong will continue to serve at Sparrow Hospital during the transition in her current roles as the medical examiner of Kalamazoo, Ingham, Muskegon, Allegan and Livingston counties, and deputy medical examiner of Barry, Eaton, Montcalm and Shiawassee counties.
"As the Kalamazoo County Medical Examiner, I welcome the opportunity to significantly increase my involvement with and service to this community," said deJong in a statement.

DeJong is a clinical associate professor in the division of human pathology and also in the department of neurology and ophthalmology at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

"As the medical director of forensic pathology at Sparrow, Dr. deJong has distinguished herself throughout Michigan as well as on a national level. We are pleased to work collaboratively with WMU School of Medicine to share Dr. deJong's clinical and leadership expertise," said Tom Ostrander, vice president of professional services for Sparrow Health System, in a statement.

DeJong, who is currently pursuing a master's degree in medical education, earned her undergraduate degree from Grand Valley State University in Allendale. She earned her medical degree from Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in East Lansing and completed a residency in anatomic pathology at Michigan State University's Grand Rapids campus. DeJong completed a fellowship in forensic pathology at Emory University and the Fulton County Medical Examiner's Office in Atlanta.

A fellow of the American Board of Pathology, Anatomic and Forensic Pathology and the National Association of Medical Examiners, deJong is also a fellow of the American Society of Clinical Pathology, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the College of American Pathologists.

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