



New WMU medical school will end 40-year MSU partnership with Kalamazoo hospitals

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By Julie Hoogland | The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- A 40-year-partnership that allowed Michigan State University medical school students and residents to train in Kalamazoo hospitals will end once Western Michigan University opens its new medical school, funded with a **\$100 million anonymous donation announced today.**

MSU leaders are disappointed at losing those longstanding ties with Bronson and Borgess hospitals, but they understand community sentiments fueling their **move to a partnership with WMU**, said Jerry Kooiman, an assistant dean at MSU's medical school in Grand Rapids.



Grand Rapids Press file photo

The new WMU medical school may also spark discussion of how many medical schools Michigan needs, Kooiman said.

"That's the bigger question and concern," he said. "What will end up happening is we will likely be exporting medical school graduates to other states."

"While the number of medical schools is increasing, the number of residencies isn't," he said.

Western, Central Michigan and Oakland universities are the new players in the medical school arena, joining established medical schools at MSU, Michigan and Wayne State.

About 30 MSU medical students per year, plus many more residents, now train in Kalamazoo's Bronson Methodist Hospital and Borgess Medical Center. Most or all existing clinical rotations and residencies will be honored but future students will be affected, Kooiman said.

"When Western starts admitting students, that will restart the clock" and no longer allow the MSU partnerships with Kalamazoo hospitals, he said. That is likely about two years away, he said.

MSU's College of Human Medicine, which each year admits 100 students in Grand Rapids and 100 in Lansing, also has

student training and residency agreements with hospitals in Grand Rapids, Lansing, Traverse City, Marquette, Midland and Flint.

"Obviously, it's one of those situations where we'd love to maintain the relationship with Kalamazoo," Kooiman said. "They are two very quality health care institutions. Our students have done very well there, and it's a good medical education program.

"But we also understand the Kalamazoo entities want to establish their own medical school, and with WMU in their backyard, those hospitals are certainly going to be part of that."

He said Western plans to tailor the size of its new medical school to fit with the needs of Kalamazoo hospitals.

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