



WMU School of Medicine offers early admission program to Kalamazoo College, WMU students

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KALAMAZOO, MI – Starting with the Class of 2015, college students at two Kalamazoo institutions can apply early decision to the new WMU School of Medicine, the medical school announced Friday.

Under the new WMedStart program, qualified Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University students can apply as juniors – bypassing both the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) and the traditional application process.

"The WMedStart program is an excellent way to offer outstanding students from Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College a seamless transition into medical school," said Dr. Hal Jenson, founding dean of the new medical school, which is slated to open its doors in August 2014. "Our organizations and the students admitted will all benefit from this collaboration."

The medical school **announced in August that it was offering students from both schools preferred status.** The early decision program is "the next logical step," said Jean Shelton, director of admissions at the WMU School of Medicine.

The program is similar to those set up by other medical schools around the U.S., she said.

"We wanted to offer this to highly qualified students who want to stay in Kalamazoo," Shelton said. "They can focus on their studies through their senior year knowing they have an acceptance and a seat waiting with us."

Students would apply their junior year and, as a condition of being accepted, would agree not to apply to other schools.

There is no set number of seats or quota established, Shelton said.

For WMU and K College students, the program allows them to bypass the standard application from the American Medical College Application Service, which at \$135 and goes up from there, depending on how many schools they apply to. They also don't have to take the MCAT exam, Shelton said, saving them the cost of the exam and the test prep classes.

It also saves the time and expense of traveling to other schools for interviews, said Diane Kiino, director of the Health Sciences Program at Kalamazoo College.

"It's very costly to apply to medical school," Kiino said. "It saves them a lot of money. It saves them a lot of time."

The caveat: Students have to be "absolutely sure" that WMed is where they want to go to school, she said.

"The program is binding," she said. "If they are accepted -- and accept the offer of admission -- they cannot apply anywhere else."

The application will be available as of Dec. 1 and the cost to apply is \$75. To qualify, WMU or Kalamazoo College students must be juniors with a GPA of 3.7 or higher, with a science and math GPA of 3.5 or higher. The medical school also will look at volunteer and community service, leadership roles or research. The deadline to be considered for the Class of 2015 is Jan. 31, 2014. (For more information, go to the **WMedStart website**.)

If a student was not accepted through early decision, they could still apply to WMed through the traditional application process without that counting against them, Shelton said. Students would find out one way or another by the end of their junior year.

"If we're their No. 1 choice and they want to stay in Kalamazoo, it's a wonderful opportunity," she said.

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