



WMU medical school: 5 things to know about the new campus

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on September 13, 2014 at 7:05 AM, updated September 15, 2014 at 12:12 PM

KALAMAZOO, MI — If you had to spend all day studying, it would be difficult to find a more engaging and beautiful place to do that than at the new **Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine**.

The state-of-the-art facility opened in August to 54 medical students and 200 residents. Members of the public will get their glimpse of the school next week when 1,500 invited guests attend the grand opening on Sept. 18, and in a community open house scheduled 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 20. The community event is free and open to the public.

The building, which used to be known as Building 267, was part of the Upjohn/Pharmacia/Pfizer downtown campuses. In 2011, MPI Research in Mattawan donated the building to WMU for the **medical school**.

WMU has spent \$68 million on renovations and new construction at the campus, renovating six floors and adding 30,000 square feet to the structure's existing 320,00 square feet.

Here are five things of note about the new building:

Curves and light. It might not have been as difficult as fitting a square peg into a round hole, but Building 267 was basically a rectangular box and "I wondered, 'How are we going to get some curves in here?'" Laura Eller, director of communications for the medical school, wondered on her first walk through.

Architects **Diekema Hamann** solved that problem by creating an addition on the north end of the building. The circular core of that section houses the Team Based Learning Halls on the first and second floors and the Virtual Hospital on the basement level. The new area is full of windows, including a three-story atrium that brings light down to even the basement. Additionally, many of the interior walls curve gently to break up the straight lines of the building.

Team-based learning. Gone are the days when students are expected to spend hours bent over their books by themselves in the library. The emphasis at the medical school is on collaborative learning and discussion. Two Team Based Learning Halls have flexible layouts so students can easily rearrange into small discussion groups. The emphasis on small-group work also is found in the small study rooms throughout the building.

"We want to teach them to operate in a team-oriented environment because when they're out in the working world they need to work with nurses, nurse practitioners and other clinicians," Eller said.

A virtual hospital, with virtual patients: Within the WMU medical school is a hospital, with exam rooms, trauma units, pediatric intensive care and an obstetrics unit. The 24,000-square-foot virtual hospital provides students the opportunity to examine and treat "patients" — patients that can sweat, cry, have a pulse and say, "Ow." These high-definition medical mannequins line the beds — newborns with breathing problems, women in labor, men who can go into cardiac arrest — and each can be computer manipulated as students treat them. "Instructors are controlling the patients based on how the student performs," Eller said. "The instructor can say, you did this, so this is what happened to the patient. There's real cause and effect."

WMU med students in the virtual hospital during first responders class

WMU med students during a team exercise in the virtual hospital in the first responders class at the new Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine.

The hospital also uses standardized patients, live performers who have been given scripts and interact with students presenting various medical conditions. Not only do faculty evaluate the students' work, but the patients provide feedback on the budding doctors' bedside manner.

Medical examiner: Area police agencies and health departments used to have to send bodies to Lansing for autopsies, but the medical school houses a new medical examiner's office that serves Kalamazoo, Allegan, Calhoun and Muskegon counties. Dr. Joyce deJong heads the office and is chair of the school's pathology department. The seventh floor is undergoing further remodeling to offer expanded services and labs.

Information corridor: Even if students wanted to spend their days hunched over their books in the library that would be impossible. Students use eBooks on their tablets and laptops. Not only are there no books, but there's not a library. Instead the second floor is home to the Information Corridor. There may not be books, but there are librarians who can help students with research. For those who like quiet, library-like settings, there is a study area with individual study pods. And for those who really miss paper books, the quiet area has half a shelf of books.

WMU Medical Student Jeff Johnson playing piano in new Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine

Medical student Jeff Johnson of Los Angeles playing the grand piano under the stairway on the first floor of the new Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine in Kalamazoo.

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