

**TEACHING HOSPITALS: A new and exciting concept in Mississippi which can bring about new medical training opportunities and potentially improve Mississippi's available physician workforce.**

Medical School graduation numbers are on the upswing in Mississippi. Mississippi is now producing medical school graduates from two medical schools, the University of Mississippi School of Medicine (UMMC) and William Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine (WCUCOM). To accommodate post graduate training for these medical student graduates, Mississippi is in need of more Teaching Hospitals across the state. The establishment of these new community-based graduate medical education (GME) programs (residencies) is needed to train these young physicians, and ideally, keep them in Mississippi and close to these communities once their training is complete.

Teaching Hospitals which will house these residencies are critical to keep pace with an expanding crop of medical school graduates from Mississippi and adjoining states. By 2022, Mississippi medical schools will potentially be graduating over 260 medical students a year. This is a dramatic increase in a state that historically produced 100 medical students per year for over 20 years.

UMMC has been the backbone of GME training for many years but GME training outside of UMMC is now appropriately on the rise. With financial support from the Office of Mississippi Physician Workforce (OMPW), GME first-year training positions at community-based GME sites (excluding Keesler Medical Center programs) increased from 14 in 2012 to 56 in 2017. Total residents in training has grown from 42 in 2012 to 138 in 2018. OMPW continues to work with these and other potential Teaching Hospital programs to further expand these GME training opportunities in Mississippi.

As outlined in Mississippi House Bills 317 and 422, OMPW addresses the primary care physician workforce shortage by nurturing and financially assisting development and support of ACGME training programs with a primary focus on family medicine residency programs. Although the focus is on family medicine, Mississippi obviously has needs in other disciplines. OMPW is already assisting with other specialties as funds are available.

A map of OMPW-assisted graduate medical education sites, below, can be found [here](#).

- [Baptist Memorial Hospital Internal Medicine Residency Program](#)
- [EC-HealthNet Family Medicine Residency Program](#)
- [Forrest General Family Medicine Residency Program](#)
- [Magnolia Regional Health Center Internal Medicine Residency Program](#)
- [Merit Health Wesley Education and Residency](#)
- [North Mississippi Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program](#)

GME expansion is positive news for Mississippi which, along with the rest of the nation, is bracing for a projected physician shortage. According to data from the Association of American Medical Colleges, the United States is expected to experience a shortage of 40,800 to 104,900 doctors by 2030. Previous estimates only applied through year 2025, but recent projections were extended through 2030 to account for the time needed to train physicians beginning medical school in 2017.

Another contributing factor is that postgraduate medical school training opportunities are limited by the number of Centers for Medicaid & Medical Services (CMMS) sponsored residency slots currently authorized. This number of federally funded residency training positions has been capped since 1997 for existing programs. The CMMS process which is the principle funding mechanism for GME training makes it rather intriguing to establish new GME training sites. What does make this possible in our state is that CMMS allows for the establishment of new Teaching Hospital programs as long as the hospital has never been previously designated a Teaching Hospital by CMMS.

Mississippi already has the lowest doctor-to-patient ratio in the country. This presents challenges but also opportunities. OMPW seeks to improve physician workforce while continuing to evaluate the state's existing physician workforce and carefully monitoring current and projected demand.

“One of OMPW’s primary goals is to put more primary care and specialty doctors to work in the state’s medically needed areas,” said Dr. John Mitchell, OMPW Director. “We know that historically, across the country, most residents stay where they do their training. By identifying and supporting new residencies, we provide more opportunities for new physicians to stay and practice right here in Mississippi and where they are needed most.”

To learn more about OMPW and to keep up with medical news in Mississippi, visit the OMPW website, [www.ompw.org](http://www.ompw.org), which serves as the electronic entry point for residency education funding opportunities, health-care advocacy sites, professional development resources, scholarship and loan repayment updates, practitioner and consumer links, physician workforce data and much more.