

UW School of Medicine and Public Health: WARM program welcomes 26 new students

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UW rural medical education program announces new crop of trainees

Overwhelming percentage of WARM grads practice in state

MADISON – Twenty-six students from Wisconsin and Illinois have earned spots in the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine.

The program, known as WARM, is part of the curriculum at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health and is a nationally recognized initiative that prepares and supports students who intend to practice in rural Wisconsin and help improve the health of those communities.

“The Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine is an exemplary example of how the School of Medicine and Public Health fulfills the principle of the Wisconsin Idea,” said Dr. Byron Crouse, associate dean for rural and community health, and WARM director.

The program was created due to the shortage of physicians in rural Wisconsin. In fact, while 29 percent of Wisconsin residents live in rural locations, only 13 percent of physicians in Wisconsin have rural practices.

Each year, the program admits 26 students. The 2017 class includes a large contingent of students from Wisconsin, but also is represented by one student from Illinois.

In the rural medicine program, students complete their first 18 months of medical school in Madison at the School of Medicine and Public Health. Students will spend the remaining years of medical school at Aurora BayCare in Green Bay, Gundersen Health System in La Crosse and Marshfield Clinic in Marshfield, along with their networks of rural hospitals and clinics.

Students also participate in regular core days at their sites to focus on a specific topic from a rural perspective and complete a community health project.

Past project topics have included farm-to-table programs, concussion awareness for youth athletes, rural drug and alcohol abuse, health literacy and community disaster drills.

Opportunities also exist for students to do electives at away sites and to pursue global health opportunities as well as complete the Master's of Public Health program or the Path of Distinction in Public Health at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

Admission is limited to applicants who are legal residents of Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois or Iowa. To date, more than 120 students have graduated from the program, and 92 percent of those graduating from residencies are practicing in Wisconsin.

"Working with partners throughout the whole state of Wisconsin, WARM is preparing physicians to meet the needs of the residents in rural Wisconsin and help to eliminate rural health disparities. We are proud that 92 percent of our WARM graduates are practicing in Wisconsin and just under one-third have returned to their hometowns," Crouse said.

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About UW School of Medicine and Public Health

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, in Madison, is the first medical school in the United States to integrate public health into all of its missions, including education. It grants medical, graduate and other health

profession degrees. It partners with teaching sites and academic campuses centered in Green Bay, La Crosse, Marshfield, and Milwaukee to enhance the rural and urban educational experiences and service learning opportunities of students across the state of Wisconsin. It has a robust Global Health Program to provide unique learning and service opportunities. The school attracts millions of dollars in basic, clinical, and public health research funding annually and provides a fertile environment for student research. It offers dual degree programs, including MD/PhD and MD/MPH integrated training programs.