



September 26, 2016

Philip Keithahn
Minnesota College of Osteopathic Medicine
320 Main Avenue
Gaylord, MN 55334-0266

Dear Philip,

Thank you for reaching out to the Minnesota Rural Health Association (MRHA) concerning development of the planned Minnesota College of Osteopathic Medicine (MNCOM). MRHA is a private, non-profit, non-partisan, statewide membership organization missioned to strengthen the health and health care of rural Minnesotans through leadership, education, advocacy and collaboration.

Among MRHA's top priorities is addressing the critical shortage of primary care providers serving rural areas of Minnesota. MRHA recently founded a Student Chapter to engage medical professions students in the future of rural health, and our association continues working with other organizations to promote development of primary care providers for rural Minnesota.

MRHA members have expressed both hopes and concerns about the MNCOM proposal. Our hopes are:

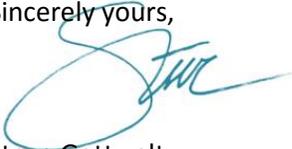
1. MNCOM will contribute additional primary care providers delivering care in rural areas of Minnesota without diminishing opportunities for primary care students at other medical schools in our state.
2. MNCOM will actively cooperate with the University of Minnesota Medical School and Mayo Medical School in collaboratively addressing overall primary care workforce needs across rural parts of our state.
3. MNCOM will generate additional economic investment and opportunity for the Gaylord area.

MRHA members have also expressed significant concerns:

1. You have indicated to our Board "about half" of clinical rotations and potential new residency positions MNCOM secures will be located outside Minnesota. MRHA is concerned this will limit the positive impact for rural Minnesota. Research shows nearly 75% of students completing medical school and residency in a given state remain in that state to practice. Of those completing residency in a state other than that of their medical school, only about 25% return to the state of their medical school for practice.
2. MNCOM has not shared details about how it plans to secure enough additional residency slots, clinical rotations and preceptors for the students it plans to educate. MRHA is concerned this will result in many MNCOM students unable to complete their medical education and become practicing primary care providers.
3. While MRHA is not opposed to competition, we are concerned this venture could have net negative consequences for overall efforts to increase Minnesota's rural primary care workforce. Federal limits on the total number of residencies make this a particular challenge for all medical schools in Minnesota.

MRHA remains interested and hopeful about this venture, and we look forward to learning more about how MNCOM will help meet Minnesota's rural primary care needs. Thank you, again, for bringing this project to our attention and seeking MRHA's input.

Sincerely yours,



Steve Gottwalt
Executive Director
steve@mnruralhealth.org

Cc: Todd Lemke, MRHA Board President
MRHA Board Members