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The School of Medicine is responsible for providing medical education within the state of Indiana. As part of a major university, it accepts and fulfills five crucial responsibilities: (1) It provides its students with the opportunity to acquire a sound basic education in medicine and fosters the development of lifelong habits of scholarship and service; (2) It advances knowledge through research in biomedical studies and studies related to the cultural and behavioral aspects of medicine and the delivery of health care; (3) It provides graduate education in order to produce practitioners, teachers, and investigators through clinical residency programs and advanced degree programs in the basic medical sciences; (4) It offers continuing education programs aimed at maintaining and improving the competence of those professionals engaged in patient care; and (5) It provides multiple services to the people of Indiana in all areas of the medical sciences and health care.

The Indiana University School of Medicine was founded in 1903 and its first students were enrolled on the Bloomington campus. It was the fourth medical school in the United States, after Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and Western Reserve, to require two or more years of collegiate work for admission. The school awarded the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree to its first class of 25 in 1907. Following the union of all medical schools in the state within Indiana University in 1908, the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, in 1909, mandated that Indiana University assume the responsibility for medical education in the state. Initially, students had the opportunity of taking the first two years of their medical school work at either Bloomington or Indianapolis. In 1912 all students entered through the Bloomington program and moved to Indianapolis for their second-, third- and fourth-year courses. This remained in effect until 1958, when the work of the Bloomington division was transferred to Indianapolis. Excellent facilities for the teaching of the basic medical sciences and a strong nucleus of basic science faculty remained in Bloomington. Consequently, in 1959 an experimental program of medical education was started in Bloomington in cooperation with the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School. This program, the Medical Sciences Program, included studies that could lead to the combined M.D./M.S. and M.D./Ph.D. degrees. The school also awards a Master of Public Health degree.

In 1965 a School of Medicine faculty committee recommended the adoption of a comprehensive plan for medical education throughout the state of Indiana. The plan involved the use of regional facilities in addition to those of the Medical Center in Indianapolis. The plan would coordinate and utilize elective programs in community hospitals, preceptorships with practicing physicians, internship and residency programs, and continuing medical education programs throughout the state.

The plan also resulted in the formation, within existing educational institutions, of “centers for medical education” for teaching basic medical science courses to first-year medical students. In 1971 the General Assembly of the State of Indiana unanimously authorized legislation establishing the Indiana Statewide Medical Education System. This legislation mandated that the Indiana University School of Medicine be responsible for selection, admission, and assignment of students, for curricular development, and for evaluation and accreditation of the system. Further development of the Indiana Statewide Medical Education System was approved in the 1979 Indiana General Assembly. Approval for planning and funding for a second year of medical study at each of the centers for medical education was passed, and second-year students were first appointed to all centers except Fort Wayne in the fall 1980 semester. Funding for second-year students at the Fort Wayne campus began in fall 1990. The School of Medicine currently has eight centers for medical education, located in Bloomington, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Gary, Muncie, South Bend, Terre Haute, and West Lafayette.

The Indiana University Medical Center campus covers some 85 acres within one mile of the center of Indianapolis. Half of the first- and second-year classes are on the IUMC campus; the other half are at the centers for medical education. The School of Medicine's enrollment in 2000–2001 consisted of nearly 1,100 M.D. students, 145 Ph.D. students, 115 M.S. students, and 38 M.D./Ph.D. students. In addition to opportunities at the centers for medical education, M.D. students may participate in clinical and elective rotations in physician offices and hospitals throughout the state and nation. Students may study or serve abroad during their medical school careers.

The IUMC campus includes Feder Hall, Van Nues Medical Sciences Building, Indiana Cancer Pavilion, IU Cancer Research Institute, the Rotary Building, and Emerson Hall. The William H. Coleman Hospital, Robert W. Long Hospital, and the Willis D. Gatch Clinical Building have been renovated to provide research and administrative offices at IUSM. The construction of a new research building began in the 2000–2001 academic year, and yet another was planned.

Hospitals that are staffed by faculty and provide residency training programs include: Wishard Memorial Hospital (a city-county hospital recently listed among the top 100 U.S. public hospitals), Roudebush VA Medical Center, Riley Hospital for Children, Indiana University Hospital and Outpatient Center, and LaRue Carter Psychiatric Hospital (state owned—about five minutes from campus). Riley and IU hospital separated from the School of Medicine in 1997 to join Methodist Hospital of Indiana to form Clarian Health Partners. Clarian Health is committed to supporting the school’s mission of advancing education, research, and patient care. Located approximately two miles from IUMC, Methodist Hospital provides additional significant educational opportunities to IU students and residents.