WWAMI Medical Education Program

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Program Description

Sponsored by the University of Washington School of Medicine and leading to an M.D. degree from that school, the WWAMI program is designed to provide medical education for citizens of the participating states (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho), to provide a physician workforce for these states, and to encourage physicians to practice in locations where they are most needed.

WWAMI is a medical school program, not a premedical program. The program is supported by the State of Montana and guarantees that 30 qualified Montana residents can be admitted to the Medical School at the University of Washington School of Medicine each year.

Students who enter the program complete their Foundations Phase (18 months) at the participating university in their home state. First year programs exist at University of Washington-Seattle, and Spokane, the University of Wyoming-Laramie, the University of Alaska in Anchorage, Montana State University-Bozeman, and the University of Idaho-Moscow. The curriculum at each site has been standardized and is compatible with the University of Washington School of Medicine curriculum which integrates the basic and clinical sciences, and includes rural health care at an early time in medical education.

Course subject matter at MSU includes seven, 3-10 week Blocks and five Threads that will continue throughout the 18th month foundations phase.

At the conclusion of the foundations phase, students enter the Patient Care Phase of their education. During this phase students have the opportunity to complete their third year and part of their fourth year of medical school at either Billings, Bozeman or Missoula. Students receive training from physicians in the communities where the physicians live and practice (community phase). These "Clerkships" are established for a given educational need (e.g., pediatrics, family medicine). Clerkship sites have been established all over the State:

Billings: Chronic Care, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Neurology, OB/GYN, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Surgery
Bozeman: Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrics and Surgery
Butte: Family Medicine
Dillon: Internal Medicine
Great Falls: Internal Medicine, Neurology, Pediatrics
Helena: OB/GYN, Pediatrics & Psychiatry
Kalispell: Family Medicine, OB/GYN, Surgery

To be eligible for the Montana State University WWAMI program, the prospective medical student must be certified by the Montana University System as a resident of Montana and must satisfy the admission requirements of the University of Washington School of Medicine. It is not necessary for a student to complete the premedical (undergraduate) education at MSU in order to be eligible for the WWAMI program. Students are selected by the Admissions Office at the University of Washington School of Medicine and are registered at the University of Washington School of Medicine as well as at their home institution for the first year and a half of the program.

Foundations Medical School Curriculum

The following courses are completed in Bozeman over an 18-month period from August in the first year through December of the following year. Student then study for and take Step I of their National Board exams and then continue to the Patient Care Phase of the curriculum.

Required Courses: First Fall Semester

Block I: Molecular & Cellular Basis of Disease (MCBD)
MEDS 510
This course teaches the principles of cell and molecular biology, physiology, biochemistry and genetics. Aspects include the organization of the genome and units of heredity, properties of macromolecules, and cytoarchitecture. Students will gain an understanding of intracellular communication, cell-cell interactions, properties of differentiated cells, and the diversity of their physiological properties and functions. Introduction to anatomy, histology and pharmacology content will be incorporated into the course.

Block II: Invaders & Defenders
MEDS 520
This course will involve integrated content in immune system, microbial biology, infectious diseases, inflammation and repair, and skin and connective tissue. Introduction to anatomy, histology and pharmacology content will be incorporated into the course.

Required Courses: Spring Semester

Block III: Circulatory Systems (CPR)
MEDS 530
Circulatory systems will present students with an integrated approach to the key supply chain and waste management systems of the body. Students will follow the movement of oxygen from the environment to the tissues, and movement of waste products of metabolism along the opposite path, examining the coordinated roles of the lungs, heart and kidney in the control and regulation of these processes. Introduction to anatomy, histology and pharmacology content will be incorporated into the course.

Block IV: Blood & Cancer
MEDS 540
This course familiarizes students with the basic pathophysiologic mechanisms leading to disturbances of red cell, white cell, and platelet production, as well as abnormalities of hemostasis presenting clinical problems, with an emphasis on pathophysiology. Additionally, this course will include relevant fundamental scientific principles in anatomy, pathology, and pharmacology.
Block V: Energetics & Homeostasis
MEDS 550
This course will involve integrated content in metabolism, nutrition, obesity, diabetes, gastrointestinal/liver physiology, and endocrinology. Additionally, this course includes relevant fundamental scientific principles in anatomy, pathology, and pharmacology.

Required Courses: Summer Term

Block VI: Mind, Brain & Behavior
MEDS 560
In this course, students will learn the fundamental scientific principles of the structure and function of the normal human nervous system in situ, define major neurologic, psychiatric and behavioral disorders, and develop a systematic approach to their differential diagnosis and management.

Required Courses: Second Fall Semester

Block VII: Lifecycle & Reproduction
MEDS 570
This course will cover normal and abnormal human development, reproductive functions including formation and maturation of ova and sperm, menstruation, normal pregnancy, and labor and delivery. Additionally, this course includes relevant fundamental scientific principles in pelvic anatomy, pathology, and pharmacology.

Threads
Anatomy, Pathology, Pharmacology, Foundations of Clinical Medicine and a Primary Care Practicum in which students are paired up with a local physician throughout the entire foundations phase.

Further Information
Contact Ashley Siemer (WWAMI Program Manager) at MSU or follow the URL http://www.montana.edu/wwawi for the complete application, admissions, and program requirements.