Enhancing the Physician Workforce in Rural Areas

As the state’s leading educator of physicians practicing in Missouri, the MU School of Medicine is in a key position to improve the supply and distribution of physicians in rural Missouri. Although it can’t single-handedly solve Missouri’s rural health physician shortage, the school does have unique capabilities to enhance the physician workforce.

In response to the challenge, Dean Lester R. Bryant requested the creation of the MU Area Health Education Center (MU AHEC) program office in 1994 to address the shortage of physicians in rural areas of the state. The MU Rural Track Pipeline Program was designed to encompass four distinct but related curriculum and clinical components. The sequential programs provide students with ongoing exposure to rural medicine.

Program Components

- Bryant Scholars Pre-Admissions Program
- Summer Community Program
- Rural Track Clerkship Program
- Rural Track Elective Program

Outcomes

- Program participants are more likely to choose a primary care specialty and twice as likely to choose family medicine as their specialty when compared to non-participants
- 55% of participants practice in a rural location
- 80% of Bryant Scholars practice in Missouri

For details on how to apply or for more information please visit medicine.missouri.edu/ahec
Program Requirements

Bryant Scholars must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.3, a cumulative math/science GPA of 3.3, and earn A or B grades in the required courses.

Bryant Scholars are required to take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) for matriculation into the MU School of Medicine. Students must achieve minimum MCAT scores set by the MU School of Medicine.

Bryant Scholars must also attend biannual retreats designed to assist with the transition to the school’s patient-based learning curriculum and to promote discussion of topics relevant to rural medicine. Required retreats take place at the MU School of Medicine in Columbia. Students are required to attend three of four retreats, including all summer retreats.

Bryant Scholars are required to enter a mentoring relationship with a rural physician during their junior year in college. Students spend at least 20 hours a year with their mentor, job shadowing and devoting time to career guidance and professional development. Students are required to write two reflection papers annually about their shadowing experiences. Additionally, Bryant Scholars are required to log 20 hours of other health-related experiences and eight hours of community service per year.

Rural Commitment

Upon matriculation into the MU School of Medicine, Bryant Scholars are required to participate in the Summer Community Program, the Rural Track Clerkship Program and the Rural Track Elective Program. Bryant Scholars are required to complete six weeks of the Summer Community Program, three rural track clerkships, and one rural track elective during medical school.

Students who successfully complete all medical school requirements of the Bryant Scholars Program will receive a Bryant Scholarship during their fourth year in medical school.