

Mission Possible: Developing a Pipeline to Care for Wisconsin's Medically Underserved Populations

Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM); Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health (TRIUMPH); Rural and Urban Scholars in Community Health (RUSCH)

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Abstract: The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) and its statewide partners are developing a trio of programs to prepare its students and future students to help make Wisconsin the healthiest state. The **RUSCH** program (Rural and Urban Scholars in Community Health) reaches out to pre-medical students while the **WARM** (Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine) and **TRIUMPH** (Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health) programs engage medical students who are committed to careers in rural or urban underserved communities. All of the programs use a targeted admissions process to select students who are most likely to practice in rural or urban areas.

Mission: Increase access to healthcare and promote health for Wisconsin's medically underserved populations by:

- Promoting health careers in rural and urban medicine.
- Developing a pipeline of medical education training programs.
- Integrating clinical medicine and public health.
- Preparing physician-advocates.

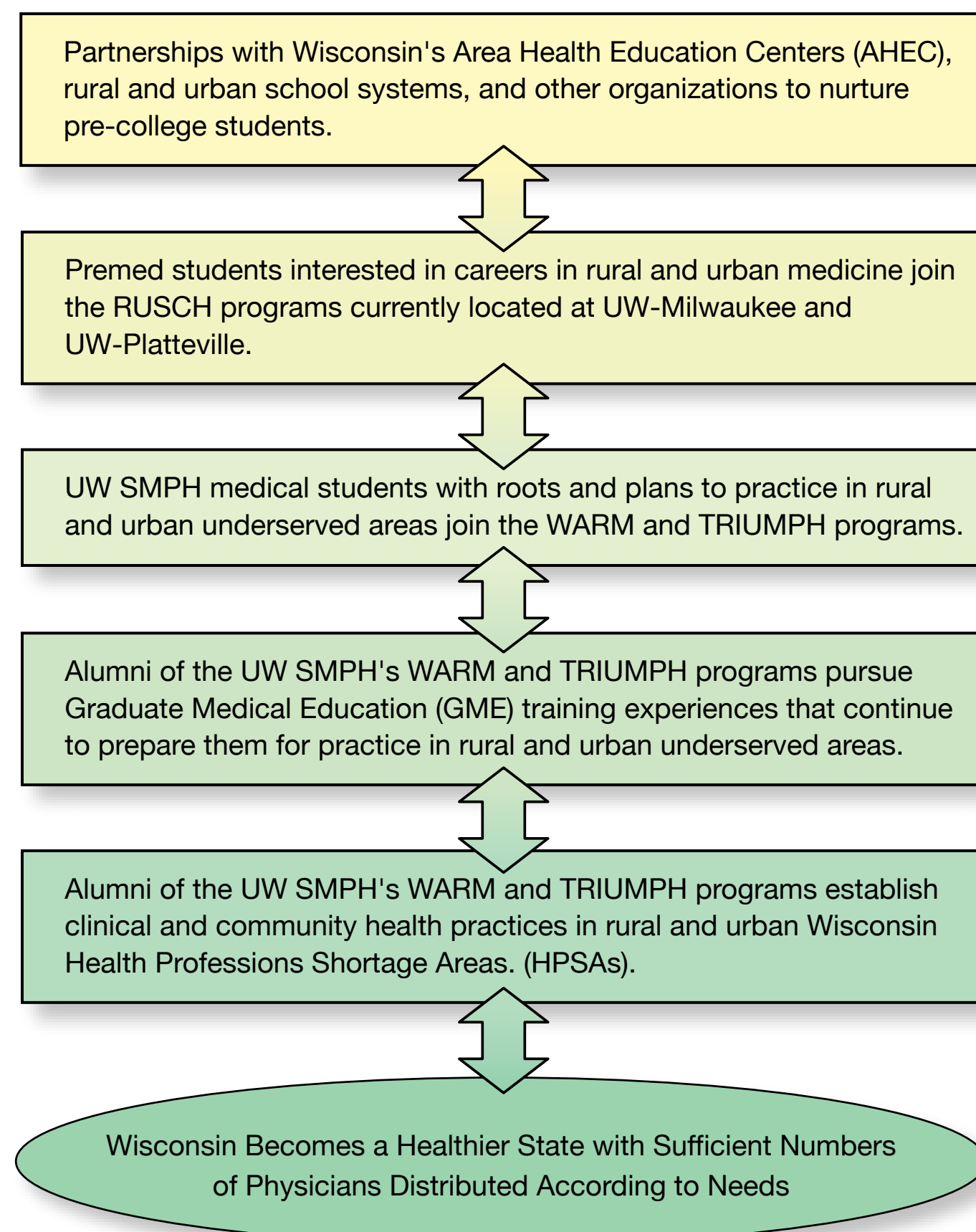
Background: The Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce identified a shortage of physicians in rural Wisconsin and the Health Professional Shortage Areas of Milwaukee, with demand expected to exceed supply for the next 20 years. Eighty-three percent (60/72) of Wisconsin counties are designated as totally or partially underserved. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the underserved counties are rural. In Milwaukee, access barriers include income, insurance status and ethnicity. HRSA has designated 133 Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in the city. Additionally, the Health of Wisconsin Report Card documents lower health outcomes (length of life and quality of life) and greater health disparities for those living in rural counties and the city of Milwaukee.

Methods: The University Wisconsin SMPH has created a trio of programs that constitute a medical education pipeline to address the state's rural and urban underserved populations' healthcare needs. These programs:

- Select students who have interests and backgrounds conducive to future practice in Wisconsin's rural and urban underserved communities;
- Integrate medicine and public health to develop competencies needed for future practice, and
- Weave together existing resources and curriculum with new partnerships to create innovative programming.

To expand this training pipeline, additional collaborations are in progress for pre-college and graduate medical education. The outcomes of all three programs will be tracked to assess impact on Wisconsin's health workforce needs and the health of Wisconsin communities.

Educational Pipeline to Prepare Health Professionals for Careers in Medically Underserved Areas of Wisconsin



WARM Website:
<http://www.med.wisc.edu/WARM>

TRIUMPH Website:
<http://www.med.wisc.edu/TRIUMPH>

RUSCH Website:
<http://www.med.wisc.edu/RUSCH>

WARM



TRIUMPH



RUSCH



WARM (2004) aims to improve the supply of physicians and the health of rural Wisconsin. WARM will increase the size of the medical school class by 25 students using a targeted admissions process designed to select students most likely to develop rural medical practices in a variety of specialty areas. Preclinical WARM electives prepare students and the longitudinal educational curriculum provides two years of clinical training in rural Wisconsin. Third and fourth year WARM students train in rural training sites sponsored by the Marshfield Clinic, Gundersen Lutheran (LaCrosse), and Aurora Bay Care (Green Bay). Regional clinical facilities and faculty from some of Wisconsin's major health care systems anchor the program, while rural community clinics, physicians, public health professionals and communities, in collaboration with these centers, provide additional training. WARM students work with a community organization to develop and implement community health improvement projects. The first WARM students started in Marshfield/Rice Lake in July 2009. A total of 36 students have been admitted to the program and 20 more will join in fall 2010. The length of the rural clinical experience, the breadth of the proposed WARM program—from UME to GME to CME—and the fact that no other rural program nationally has embraced laying the foundation for work in multiple specialty areas makes WARM unique and innovative.

TRIUMPH (2008) aims to improve the supply of physicians and the health of urban Wisconsin. TRIUMPH is a 15-month, experience beginning in January of the third year for medical students with strong interests in working with urban, disadvantaged populations. TRIUMPH connects Milwaukee clinical rotations with service learning opportunities through partnerships with community and public health organizations. Students complete third year Obstetrics/Gynecology, Primary Care, and Internal Medicine rotations in Milwaukee, as well as a 2-week Community And Public Health ENrichment Experience (CAPHENE). Each student is assigned to work with a community organization to complete a community health improvement project; they may devote up to 300 hours to this project over the course of 15 months in Milwaukee. Students remain in Milwaukee for most of the fourth year to complete additional clinical rotations, a longitudinal preceptorship with a local physician, and community and public health projects. The TRIUMPH group meets weekly to explore issues relevant to urban health, discuss case presentations, explore cultural and ethical issues, and to learn advocacy skills. The pilot program enrolled 6 students in 2009; the full program began with 8 students in January 2010. Student and community host site interest has already exceeded the program capacity.

RUSCH (2009) is designed to attract students who plan to attend the UW SMPH and intend to practice rural or urban medically underserved areas of Wisconsin. RUSCH aims to recruit students from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds and to provide them with support to be successful in medical school and in practice. The premed component to the pipeline, RUSCH was initiated at UW-Milwaukee and UW-Platteville. Expansion to other UW campuses is under consideration. RUSCH is a two-year program that provides students with the opportunity to learn more about careers in medicine, participate in community health improvement projects, and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that will prepare them for admission to and success in medical school (criteria for selection include demonstrated community service commitment, student academic performance, and interest in urban or rural underserved medical practice). Students receive stipends for summer internships. Eleven students (5 from UWP; 6 from UWM) began the program in May 2009; seven of the accepted applicants have rural health interests and four have urban health interests. All fulfilled science course prerequisites, met minimum GPA standards, and completed at least one year of undergraduate study.

Partnerships: These programs would not be possible without dedicated community partners and funding and in-kind support from the State of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. Current partners include the following:

WARM Partners: Marshfield Clinic in Marshfield and Rice Lake, Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center (LaCrosse), Aurora Bay Care (Green Bay), Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, Wisconsin Area Health Education Centers, Wisconsin Office of Rural Health, Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association, and numerous rural hospitals and health departments.

TRIUMPH Partners: Aurora Health Care, Aurora Family Service, Bread of Healing Clinic, Center for Urban Population Health, City of Milwaukee Health Department, City on a Hill, Growing Power, Historic Milwaukee, Inc., Milwaukee Area Health Education Center, Milwaukee Health Services, Inc., Milwaukee Public Schools/Aurora School-based Health, Public Allies, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, United Community Center, Walker's Point Community Clinic/Core El Centro, Walnut Way Conservation Corp, and the Wisconsin Arts Board.

RUSCH Partners: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Milwaukee AHEC, Aurora UW Medical Group, City of Milwaukee Health Department, City on a Hill Clinic, Southwest Health Center, Doctors Park Physicians, Medical Associates of Platteville and Maski & Maski Clinic.