HEALTHCARE AND WELLNESS

EDUCATING STUDENTS, IMPACTING COMMUNITIES

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HEALTHCARE / WELLNESS

27%
Of all bachelor’s degrees in health professions and related programs in Ohio awarded by Ohio University1 as of 2012

58%
OU-HCOM physician graduates practicing in Ohio

560
Students enrolled in the Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine

2,366
Degrees conferred across all healthcare programs on all OHIO campuses

4%
Of physicians in Ohio are OU-HCOM graduates

12%
Of physicians in rural communities are OU-HCOM graduates

1,300
Medical trainees in the state of Ohio through CORE

10,000
Visits by Ohio residents to Ohio University Therapy Associates each year

31,900
Patients reached through OU-HCOM’s Community Health Programs (2011–2012)

INTRODUCTION

Ohio University (OHIO) is a leader in the training of healthcare professionals, provision of healthcare services, and promotion of healthy lifestyles to Ohioans. Many of Appalachian Ohio’s rural communities experience gaps in healthcare, leaving some residents with little access to quality services. OHIO’s programs, in conjunction with regional healthcare partners, aim to fill these gaps by providing services, resources, outreach, and education. Trusted by partners and residents alike, OHIO effectively links services to those in the greatest need.

The University is committed to providing the workforce necessary to ensure the accessibility of quality healthcare services and the promotion of healthy lifestyles throughout the region. With the nationally recognized Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, Ohio’s largest school of nursing, and allied health programs focused on in-demand occupations, OHIO is the region’s leading provider of doctors, nurses, and allied health workers to hospitals and healthcare employers. In 2011–12, OHIO graduated more than 2,300 students across all healthcare programs at all campuses.

The University’s research initiatives keep OHIO faculty on the cutting edge of healthcare breakthroughs and discoveries; focus on medical conditions relevant to southeast Ohio, the state of Ohio, and the nation; and deliver knowledge and medical advances to southeast Ohio.

TRAINING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

With the nationally recognized Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, Ohio’s largest school of nursing, and allied health programs, OHIO is the region’s leading provider of doctors, nurses, and allied health workers to hospitals and healthcare employers.

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1 Ohio Board of Regents, 2012.
2 College Navigator, 2013.
PREPARING HIGHLY QUALIFIED HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

The demand for healthcare professionals—especially those trained to respond to the region’s unique characteristics and health issues—is high in southeast Ohio. Ohio University is committed to training professionals to meet these needs and improve overall wellness and quality of life in the region.

Ohio’s Top Educator of New Physicians

A 2012 analysis of primary care physician needs in Ohio revealed that 56 of Ohio’s 88 counties (63.5 percent) experience physician shortages. The Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine (OU-HCOM)—the state’s only osteopathic medical school—is helping to fill that need. OU-HCOM is nationally in the top 10 percent of medical schools that graduate physicians who enter primary care residencies. It leads all Ohio medical schools in the percentage of graduates practicing in areas with a shortage of healthcare professionals, as well as the percentage of graduates who stay in Ohio to practice; 4 percent of physicians statewide and 12 percent of those practicing in Ohio’s rural communities are graduates of OU-HCOM. In fact, without OU-HCOM, the ratio of Ohio counties experiencing physician shortages would jump to 71.5 percent.

OU-HCOM is not only a leading provider of physicians; it is also a leader in medical education. It administers the Centers for Osteopathic Research and Education (CORE), an integrated medical consortium of 27 teaching hospitals across the state, including the Cleveland Clinic and OhioHealth, as well as osteopathic medical schools in Missouri, Arizona, Iowa, and Kentucky. In 1997, the CORE became the nation’s first accredited Osteopathic Post-Doctoral Training Institute, dedicated to the highest quality in post-graduate medical education. CORE is considered one of the most collegial and progressive OPTIs in the nation.
CORE trainees learn from experts in many different fields: faculty involved in CORE represent 99 different specialties. In 2012, approximately 1,300 medical trainees in Ohio participated in educational opportunities offered by CORE.

A New Generation of Allied Health Professionals

Ohio University also is at the forefront of preparing allied health professionals for the state. Through the College of Health Sciences and Professions (CHSP), OHIO is adapting to meet market demands, continuing to provide training in traditionally popular fields like nursing while creating new programs to expand into new areas of need.

CHSP is home to the largest nursing school in the state of Ohio, with total enrollment in 2012 of over 6,500 students across the University system. Included in these programs is the innovative online RN-to-BSN that serves approximately 5,200 student in five states: Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Michigan (see sidebar).

HELPING NURSES MEET NEW HIRING STANDARDS

Increasingly, the healthcare industry requires nurses to hold bachelor’s degrees, rather than associate’s degrees. To help Ohio’s thousands of working nurses meet these standards, Ohio University created the RN-to-BSN program. Courses are offered online to individual nurses, as well as through partnerships with community colleges and healthcare facilities. The RN-to-BSN program has enabled more than 2,500 nurses to obtain their bachelor’s degrees without leaving their jobs.

OHIO’s five regional campuses have significant student enrollment in allied health fields, as well as high completion rates. Healthcare is the fastest-growing industry in southeast Ohio, and healthcare facilities are among the largest employers in each regional campus service area. As a result, students at regional campuses may complete observations, clinicals, and internships in the same facilities where they will likely seek jobs upon graduation. The relationships also serve as a pipeline for local employers to fill in-demand positions with qualified, well-educated healthcare professionals. Programs fully present at one or more of the regional campuses include nursing, health services administration, social work, and exercise physiology. In 2012, more than 300 students graduated from OHIO’s regional campus healthcare programs.³

1,300 MEDICAL TRAINEES

Participated in educational opportunities offered by Centers for Osteopathic Research and Education (CORE) in the State of Ohio in 2012

³ College Navigator, 2013.
CREATING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, LOW-COST HEALTHCARE

The expertise and resources that Ohio University brings to southeast Ohio make high-quality and low-cost healthcare services and outreach available to the region’s residents, many of whom may not otherwise have access to these necessities. OHIO identifies gaps in services and builds networks of partnerships with other health and wellness organizations to mobilize resources and volunteers to provide services. This strong network, combined with a wide range of staff and faculty expertise, gives OHIO a unique ability to fill the region’s healthcare gaps with a comprehensive range of services.

Among the region’s most beneficial resources is University Medical Associates (UMA), consisting of physicians who are OU-HCOM faculty members. UMA provides high-quality healthcare at a competitive cost to local residents. The faculty-physicians represent a variety of specialties, including family medicine, pediatrics, diabetes care, urgent care, sports medicine, and women’s health. Up to 55 percent of UMA customers are on Medicare or Medicaid.

Another community resource is Ohio University Therapy Associates (OUTA), which provides physical and occupational therapy, speech pathology, and audiology services. OUTA records more than 10,000 visits per year by southeast Ohio residents needing hearing, speech and physical therapy treatment. This program also provides clinical experiences to dozens of students across related majors.

A Leader in Community Healthcare

OHIO’s efforts to serve the community are strengthened through its partnerships with area healthcare providers; indeed, many University programs are possible only through such partnerships. For example, HeartWorks, a partnership between O’Bleness Memorial Hospital and OHIO’s WellWorks, is a cardiac rehabilitation program that helps patients with heart disease increase their recovery by slowing, stopping, or even reversing their
MAKING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

OU-HCOM’s Community Health Programs provide an invaluable asset to local residents through its Free Clinic. Services range from pharmaceutical assistance and childhood immunizations to breast and cervical cancer screenings—services that can literally save lives.

In 2011–12, the Free Clinic served 706 patients—an increase of more than 36 percent over the previous year, demonstrating the program’s strong reputation and visibility in the community.

For many, the Free Clinic is their only source of healthcare. Nearly 85 percent of patients of the Free Clinic and over 81 percent of recipients of breast and cervical screenings have indicated that without CHP, they would not have received care at all.

This program fills a significant need in the region; area residents have up to a 20 percent higher risk of dying from heart disease than people living in other parts of the country. HeartWorks includes customized and supervised exercise and strength training programs, lifestyle and nutrition counseling, and stress management techniques. Between the program’s launch in 2001 and 2012, it worked with more than 1,000 patients.

Community Health Outreach

Perhaps OU-HCOM’s greatest community impact comes through its Community Health Programs (CHP), which links physicians and allied healthcare professionals—both from the University and outside it—with those who lack adequate access to healthcare. Through these partnerships, CHP has become a trusted resource to identify health and wellness needs and convene the volunteer support essential to making service delivery possible. In 2011–12, CHP provided services to over 31,900 people in 15 counties. CHP programs and services include free clinics for primary and diabetes care and dermatology; free breast and cervical screenings for uninsured and underinsured women, as well as women’s health education for teens; free and low-cost immunizations for all ages; and free screenings for glaucoma, blood pressure, and cholesterol, glucose levels. Services are available at OU-HCOM in Athens or via Mobile Clinics housed in specially equipped 40-foot trucks, making quality, affordable healthcare accessible in some of the poorest and most remote parts of the state (see sidebar).

CHP also administers COMCorps, an AmeriCorps program that provides health education and services. COMCorps volunteers make an 11-month commitment, each providing 1,700 hours of service in partnership with regional schools, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. In 2012–13, 21 COMCorps members donated 35,700 hours of service, giving more than 1,000 health education presentations to over 5,000 students and conducting 12,000 health screenings with almost 900 referrals for further care.

The Family Navigator Program empowers parents and caregivers to be more involved in healthcare decisions concerning children with special needs. The program offers screenings for developmental delays and autism spectrum disorders, educates parents on caring for special-needs children, and gives families referral options, follow-
up services, and access to the SE Ohio Interdisciplinary Assessment Team, a monthly, multidisciplinary clinic partnering local service providers with development and autism spectrum disorder specialists at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus.

OHIO’s community healthcare programs also combine community service with educational opportunities. For example, the annual Flu Clinic held at Ohio University Zanesville Campus is both an immunization program and an exercise in emergency preparedness. All healthcare faculty and students participate in the event, volunteering their time to give flu shots to thousands of residents of Muskingum and surrounding counties. The shots are free of charge for students and Muskingum County residents, and administration is easy; many shots are given to patients still in their cars. In 2012, the clinic administered between 2,000 and 3,000 flu shots.

**COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS**

In 2011–2012, OHIO’s Community Health Programs delivered outreach services to communities in 17 Ohio counties, providing care to over 31,900 patients.

“[OU-HCOM] has been instrumental over the years in huge improvements [to the community’s access to quality primary healthcare]. We have seen steady increases in the numbers of family doctors, pediatricians, specialists like orthopedic surgeons and cardiologists, preventive health outreach programs, screening opportunities, and basic health-related teaching and research right here in Athens.”

— Chuck Hammer, Athens City-County Health Department Administrator
ADVANCING WELLNESS AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Several OHIO programs and institutes focus on research, education, and promotional activities to advance wellness and healthy lifestyles for residents of southeast Ohio. These activities address pervasive health issues among the regional population—including diabetes, obesity, and drug and alcohol addiction—and offer solutions and techniques to reduce their prevalence.

Health Research and Medical Education

In 2012, various entities focused on diabetes and metabolic diseases in CHSP and OU-HCOM consolidated to form the Diabetes Institute. Through an innovative research culture that links laboratory and clinical investigations, faculty and staff work toward solutions that will enable better care and prevention, and even a possible cure, for diabetes patients. The Institute also educates patients in managing and coping with their disease, as well as professionals who seek to offer the best possible care to their patients (see sidebar).

More generally, the Appalachian Rural Health Institute (ARHI) at Ohio University works through partnerships to integrate education, research, and outreach on rural health issues. The Institute strives for community-engaged research for the greatest impact, ensuring that interventions and policies are culturally appropriate and responsive to residents’ specific needs. Between July 2007 and February 2013, ARHI was awarded nearly $4.3 million for its research by federal, state, and local funders. These funds have enabled initiatives including professional workforce development to improve access to health care, family navigation services, prevention and health promotion for young children, chronic disease management, HIV prevention and research ethics, and innovations in health delivery.

HELPING DIABETES PATIENTS

New technology developed by OHIO researchers strives to help diabetes patients track insulin and blood sugar levels.
To keep the region’s healthcare providers up to date, OHIO hosts the Consortium for Health Education in Appalachia Ohio (CHEAO), an Area Health Education Center that partners with primary care providers, state agencies, clinics, schools, and other key stakeholders to promote and support programs that will enhance the health careers workforce and/or foster better health for southeast Ohio communities. CHEAO’s training and professional development opportunities focus on primary care, education, and services to underserved areas. The center coordinates opportunities for continuing medical education and American Heart Association training and certifications; it also organizes health fairs and school visits to promote healthy living and healthcare careers to regional youth.

Health education extends to the region’s youngest residents. One example is Kids on Campus, a community-university partnership that brings underserved youth to campus for after-school education, recreation, and nutrition. This program promotes academic skills while emphasizing food, nutrition, positive lifestyle choices, and overall well-being—issues that are pertinent to improving the health of the local region. Kids on Campus serves approximately 700 children each year.

Many of these initiatives are learning laboratories for OHIO students. In the 2011-12 school year, OHIO students provided more than 3,300 hours of community service to residents through internships and experiential learning with CHEAO. In January 2013, CHSP’s Office of Community Engagement began a partnership with the Athens County Child Advocacy Center to allow students in nursing, social work, and family studies to learn from working with children who are sexual abuse victims.
Community Resources for Healthy Lifestyles

OHIO also enables healthy lifestyle choices and improvement of well-being for its students, employees, and the community. WellWorks, a health and wellness facility located on the Athens campus, has 1,400 members, of whom about 70 percent are University-related (students, employees, or family members) and 30 percent are residents of the Athens area. All members have access to a fitness center, group fitness classes, and personal training. Services such as nutrition counseling, massage services, educational programs, and health screenings are available to members and nonmembers alike. WellWorks also provides wellness programs aimed to help educate residents about healthier lifestyles, such as Risk Reduction, which helps those with lifestyle diseases or their risk factors through structured, supervised health education.

OHIO’s regional campuses also provide resources to promote fitness and wellness among students, faculty, and community members in their service areas:

- Ohio University Chillicothe Campus offers fitness memberships to its Shoemaker Center at a lower cost than other area facilities.

- The Ohio University Eastern Campus Fitness Center is available by membership to community members. As of 2012, approximately 700 residents have taken advantage of the offering.

- Ohio University Zanesville Campus is engaging in a partnership with the local YMCA, the Muskingum County Community Foundation, and Genesis Healthcare System to establish the Muskingum County Recreation Center.

- Ohio University Lancaster Campus recently became fitTOGETHER certified, identifying it as an area employer that promotes a healthy work environment for its employees. The program is an initiative to promote healthier eating habits and exercise to members of the Lancaster community.

WELLWORKS BY THE NUMBERS

(in 2011-2012)

- **1,400** WellWorks members
- **67,000** Visits were accumulated to the center
- **329** Visits were for nutritional counseling appointments
- **1,415** Visits were for personal training sessions
- **1,407** Visits were for massages
COMMITTING TO MEET FUTURE HEALTHCARE NEEDS

Having established itself as an invaluable asset in providing healthcare and education in southeast Ohio, Ohio University is committed to responding to future regional needs.

In April 2011, OU-HCOM received a $105 million gift from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundations, the largest gift ever awarded to support primary care education in the United States and a substantial investment toward the college’s goal of becoming a national leader in osteopathic medical education and research.

The funds have enabled OU-HCOM to prepare for the launch of a new extension campus in Dublin, Ohio. Through an agreement with OhioHealth, the Central Ohio Extension Campus in Dublin will allow students to complete all four years of their medical education in central Ohio. When it opens in 2014, the campus will expand OU-HCOM enrollment by 50 students. By the time this first cohort graduates in 2018, the campus is expected to have an annual economic impact of $26.4 million, create more than 145 jobs, and generate more than $1 million in tax revenue for state and local governments.

Elsewhere in the state, a partnership with the Cleveland Clinic will create the Northeast Ohio Extension Campus in Cleveland. This campus will open for classes in July 2015, hosting thirty-two medical students. Upon this cohort’s graduation in 2019, the campus is expected to have an annual impact of $19 million, create more than 100 jobs, and generate more than $700,000 in tax revenues for state and local governments.

The gift from the Osteopathic Heritage Foundations also gave significant support to continued research efforts at the Diabetes Institute and the Ohio Musculoskeletal and Neurological Institute. Each received funding to further outreach and research into some of the most pervasive health issues throughout southeast Ohio, the state, and the nation.

The College of Health Sciences and Professions also continues to expand its portfolio of programs and activities. The college’s very healthy financial bottom line provides resources for expanded community health outreach activities and investment in new programs to meet health needs in the region and the state. These include new programs in physician assistant studies and clinical informatics now under development, as well as various other programs in the early stages of planning.

$105 MILLION GIFT

The Osteopathic Heritage Foundation gift to OU-HCOM is the largest ever awarded to support primary care education in the United States, and a substantial investment toward the college’s goal of becoming a national leader in osteopathic medical education and research.
CONCLUSION

Ohio University plays an invaluable role in the promotion, improvement, and accessibility of healthcare and wellness for southeast Ohio. OHIO ensures the future sustainability of all of these efforts through the first-class education of physicians, nurses, and allied health workers who will continue to fill gaps in the healthcare industry for generations to come. Were it not for the presence of the University and its partners, many residents of southeast Ohio and the state would have no access to the quality healthcare resources that are critical to health and well-being. OHIO’s commitment to promoting health and wellness for the whole southeast Ohio region will continue to drive its work, ensuring that the University maintains its position as a leading provider of medical education, research, and outreach.

FIG. 1 / THE LOCATIONS OF EXTENSION CAMPUSES

OU-HCOM plans to launch new extension campuses in Central and Northeast Ohio.

NORTHEAST OHIO EXTENSION CAMPUS (OPENING 2015)

CENTRAL OHIO EXTENSION CAMPUS (OPENING 2014)

OU-HCOM ATHENS CAMPUS