

2021 Delaware Institute for Medical Education and Research (DIMER) Annual Report:

Abridged Executive Summary

History and Background

The Delaware Institute of Medical Education and Research (DIMER) was founded in 1969, as an alternative to an in-state medical school, to address the concern of access to high-quality medical education for Delaware residents. Upon creation, DIMER formalized a relationship with Thomas Jefferson University for 20 admission slots for Delawareans at Jefferson Medical College (now Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC)). In 2000, DIMER expanded its education relationships to also include the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), further increasing access to medical education for Delawareans. Upon creation, PCOM held five admission slots for qualified Delaware applicants and in 2019, the number of admission slots was increased to 10. DIMER is incredibly grateful to both institutions, who continue to exceed their commitments in accepting highly qualified Delawareans into their respective medical education programs and provide the highest quality training to future physicians.

The DIMER Advantage

Delaware is one of four states that does not offer an in state medical school. This would ordinarily present a disadvantage for Delaware residents seeking medical education and future careers in medical professions. However, through its innovative relationships with SKMC and PCOM, Delaware has secured a minimum number of slots for highly qualified Delaware applicants. In recent years, SKMC and PCOM have each seen an increase in annual applications received to an estimated 12,000 applications for ultimately no more than 280 slots per respective institution. As a DIMER applicant, Delaware resident applications are pulled from the overall 12,000 applications received and evaluated against Delaware only applicants. This significantly improves the odds, to being one of ultimately 30 or more slots out of approximately 90-100 Delaware applicants. DIMER therefore provides one of the best medical education admission advantages in the country for qualified applicants from the First State.

Delaware Branch Campus and Residency

DIMER is not only focused on providing medical education opportunities for Delawareans but also on the retention of Delaware physicians to serve our communities. DIMER's relationships extend beyond its education partners and into Delaware's health systems and Delaware Health Sciences Alliance (DHSA) partners. DIMER Medical students at SKMC and PCOM have an opportunity to conduct their third- and fourth-year rotations at the Delaware Branch Campus. The Delaware Branch Campus provides medical students clinical training at ChristianaCare, Nemours, and the Wilmington VA Medical Center. In addition, PCOM clinical rotations also include Bayhealth's Kent and Sussex Campuses as well as recently adding opportunities for rotation at Beebe Healthcare also in Sussex County.

The opportunities for residency training in Delaware are numerous and expanding. ChristianaCare and Nemours offer an array of residency opportunities. Delaware residency match opportunities are not limited to Delaware Branch Campus partners as St. Francis also has

a residency program and Bayhealth launched its family medicine and internal medicine residency programs in 2021. Beebe Healthcare is also currently planning for a launch of its family medicine residency program in 2023. Bayhealth also has plans to launch its general surgery residency program in 2022 and an emergency medicine program in 2023. Recruitment and retention of Delaware physicians is enhanced with the increased opportunities for Delawareans to complete their medical training and serve their community in their home state.

The DIMER Board recognizes the high cost for medical education and enormous debt students face upon graduation. The DIMER Board continued to advocate and work closely with the Health Care Commission, Delaware Legislators, and partners such as the Delaware Health Sciences Alliance, in support of the now passed legislature for a new robust State of Delaware Student Loan Repayment Program. This program will provide for increased participation and funding support for those physicians with Primary Care focused specialties, serving geographic areas of need throughout the First State. DIMER leadership looks forward to continued engagement and advocacy as the new loan repayment program is implemented increasing opportunities to support returning physicians to Delaware.

DIMER has a rich tradition of extending its activities beyond its mission to ensure access to quality medical education for Delaware residents. DIMER and its partners are committed to providing a network of support for its students and engage students throughout the academic year in a variety of ways. In collaboration with DHSA, DIMER provided care packages to each student; co-hosted virtual receptions with PCOM and SKMC for DIMER students to network with DIMER and institutional leadership; and conducted virtual awareness events in every county with prospective students and families to discuss the many benefits of DIMER.

Conclusion

The DIMER program continues to represent an incredible value for Delawareans' medical education. The full annual report contains detailed information on the demographics and data relative to DIMER's 2021 incoming and graduating classes, as well as personal stories from state and institution leadership, including DIMER students. DIMER's approach to partnering with the DHSA, health systems and others has resulted in a robust array of services intended to facilitate Delawareans' pathway to medical school and improved chances of returning to Delaware to practice medicine in geographic and specialty areas of need. We express our gratitude for all who have supported DIMER over its 50-year plus history and look forward to even greater achievements in the future.

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