

MARIAN UNIVERSITY

Indianapolis

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Indiana Osteopathic Association Endorses Marian University's Proposal to Start Indiana's First College of Osteopathic Medicine

IOA board endorsement, \$30 million pledge clears the way for Marian University to begin development.

INDIANAPOLIS – For many years, the [Indiana Osteopathic Association](http://www.inosteo.org/) (IOA; <http://www.inosteo.org/>) has envisioned a college of osteopathic medicine in this state. On Tuesday, January 5, the board of the IOA, representing approximately 800 osteopathic physicians (D.O.s) in Indiana, voted to endorse a proposal submitted by Marian University. This vote of confidence cleared the way for the Board of Trustees of Marian University to approve a feasibility/implementation study that includes accreditation milestones, curriculum design, facility construction, and faculty search. The Board of Trustees will review and approve each step in the process to achieve full accreditation by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation. Marian University's proposal included a \$30 million pledge from an anonymous donor—nearly half of the anticipated \$75 million development cost. **The \$30 million pledge is the largest gift that the university has ever received.**

"Indiana does not currently have a college of osteopathic medicine, and those who want to become an osteopathic physician must go out of the state," said Marian University president Daniel J. Elsener. "We have been encouraged by the leaders of Indiana's healthcare industry to consider this venture, and we have heard that call," he continued. A college of osteopathic medicine will complement and strengthen Indiana's existing medical programs, particularly as it relates to educating more primary care physicians (currently Indiana has 855 actively licensed D.O.s). Marian University's proposal team was led by Daniel J. Elsener, president; Dr. Thomas J. Enneking, provost; Dr. Anita Siccardi, dean of the School of Nursing; Dr. Loren Bertocci, dean of the School of Mathematics and Sciences; and key people from the Board of Trustees.

In a letter to IOA member physicians that was mailed earlier this week, IOA board president Thomas G. Akre, D.O. indicated that the association's endorsement because of the university's existing relationships in the healthcare community. "Our decision was based in part on [Marian University's] affiliations with large hospital systems that can provide a variety of strong clinical experiences for third and fourth year students," wrote Akre.

The endorsement also creates an exciting opportunity for Marian University to respond to meet the healthcare needs of underserved urban and rural communities. The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) is keenly interested in educating more doctors who are willing to practice in underserved rural and urban communities. "Osteopathic physicians are twice as likely as their colleagues who graduate from medical school as M.D.s to be primary care physicians, and twice as likely to practice in rural areas," said IOA executive director Michael H. Claphan, CAE. He also explained that osteopathic physicians are trained to treat the health of the whole person, which is an approach to healthcare that is deeply compatible with Marian University's Franciscan and Catholic values and its approach to educating the whole person: mind, body, and spirit.

Marian University's long-term effort to recruiting students from high need areas also caught the attention of the IOA subcommittee in charge of the selection process. "Indiana's osteopathic physicians are deeply concerned with the gaps in healthcare that exist not only in rural Indiana, but also in urban areas throughout Indiana," said Claphan. "Recruiting students from these communities is important because we know from experience that they will tend to go back to those areas as doctors to work and live." Marian University has the state's second highest minority enrollment at over 18 percent, and is one of the most ardent supporters of the state's [21st Century Scholars](#) program.

"We recognize that the IOA has high expectations that we will build and operate an excellent college of osteopathic medicine," said Elsener. "Marian University is well positioned to operate a top tier medical school grounded in the Catholic intellectual tradition and built on the strong liberal arts foundation that has been the hallmark of a Marian University education in Indianapolis since 1937. We are committed to providing an education that will create physicians who provide expert care, and that their hearts and spirits are those becoming of a deeply caring and compassionate healthcare provider, especially to those most vulnerable and in need." Elsener pointed to the university's existing programs in nursing and education, and its emphasis on service to the community, as proof of the commitment to even greater contributions to the social, economic, and cultural well being of Indiana, the country, and beyond. "On occasions of bold endeavors such as this, we are reminded of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, who have instilled in the Marian University community the courage to venture into new realms of service to humanity. It is also an occasion to thank the dedicated faculty, staff, Board of Trustees, and donors who collaborate with us in offering a transformative educational experience," Elsener continued.

Osteopathic Medicine Facts (Indiana)

- 855 actively licensed D.O.s; 62 percent are primary care physicians
- Marion (191), Lake (169), and Saint Joseph (130) counties have the most D.O.s
- 26 colleges of osteopathic medicine nationwide, 0 in Indiana, 0 are affiliated with a Catholic college or university
- Osteopathic medicine was founded in the United States in 1874 by Civil War veteran Dr. Andrew Taylor Still
- Westview Hospital on the west side of Indianapolis is the state's only osteopathic hospital

About the Indiana Osteopathic Association

The Indiana Osteopathic Association represents the more than 800 osteopathic physicians practicing in Indiana, as well as their patients, and has been working to improve the health of Hoosiers since 1897.

About Marian University

Marian University (www.marian.edu) is the only Catholic liberal arts university in central Indiana. It is a private, co-educational school offering classes to both traditional and non-traditional students. Located two miles northwest of downtown Indianapolis, Marian University is a Catholic university dedicated to excellent teaching and learning in the Franciscan and liberal arts traditions. It is one of Indiana's 31 independent colleges, and one of 244 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. On July 1, 2009, Marian College became Marian University.