

February 8, 2011

Senator Luther Olsen, Chair
Health Care Access Special Committee
1023 Thomas Street
Ripon, WI 54971

Dear Senator Olsen:

Those of us who supported the creation of the Legislative Council Health Care Access Committee were motivated by a concern that there was going to be a severe shortage of Health Care professionals in Wisconsin in the near future, particularly of physicians and nurses.

We have all seen studies that show an anticipated shortage of over 90,000 doctors in the U.S. in the next 10 years. We also know that Wisconsin faces a severe shortage of teaching nurses, with 18% of nursing faculty and 23% of nursing administrators projected to retire by 2012. We also must address creating incentives for students from underserved areas to enter those professions, as studies have shown that they are the graduates most likely to return to practice in underserved areas upon completion of their education and residency. Our committee must address those problems before we conclude.

In order to address the anticipated physician shortage, I propose we consider any of three options:

- 1) Expand enrollment in the existing UW Medical School
- 2) Create a new four-year or two-year Medical School elsewhere in Wisconsin (if a two-year school, one teaching the core sciences, with third and fourth year students attending either the UW Medical School or the Medical College of Wisconsin.)
- 3) Encouraging and financially supporting the creation of a State affiliated, privately funded Osteopathic Medical School elsewhere in Wisconsin. Providing sufficient state support to condition enrollment criteria as outlined in this document.

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These expanded opportunities should disproportionately be open to students from underserved areas. Twenty percent of the admissions would be awarded to students who graduated from high school in HIPA areas, and fourteen percent would be awarded to high school graduates from the Milwaukee Public School system.

At the first meeting, we heard from Jenni Sevenich of the Westside Healthcare Association, who stressed the importance of health care professionals being able to effectively relate to the persons that they are serving. Facilitating the enrollment of students from HIPA areas and other urban centers would ensure that students graduating from medical schools in Wisconsin are culturally attuned to the needs of consistently underserved populations.

To address the teaching nurse shortage, we must create a state administered program giving sufficient financial incentives or assistance to encourage nurses to enter the teaching field. I am aware that we have not addressed all the access problems brought to our attention.

If we fail to address the fundamental concerns that are outlined herein, we have failed in our attempt to address this crisis that our citizens face.

Yours sincerely,

FREDERICK P. KESSLER
State Representative
12th Assembly District