



MEETING THE NEED

COLLEGE OF
OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICINE
CASE FOR SUPPORT



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT ANDY FEINSTEIN



The University of Northern Colorado was established as a normal school in 1889 when the citizens of Greeley responded to a need for educators across Colorado. Over the decades that followed, our mission expanded as our community and state grew and changed. While our

roots remain strong as a leader in preparing teachers and school administrators, we have diversified our academic portfolio to include programs that prepare students to be leaders in a variety of fields in service of workforce development and the common good.

Today, we find ourselves positioned to meet another critical challenge that will shape the health, strength, and growth of Greeley, Weld County, and the state for many years to come. There is a startling shortage of doctors in Colorado; only 35% of the state's need for physicians is currently met according to the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. Physician shortages are already negatively affecting access to care, a problem felt most acutely in rural communities. The problem will only get worse as doctors retire and the state's population continues to grow. The two existing medical education programs in Colorado cannot produce enough new doctors to meet current and future demand. In fact, they have to turn away thousands of applicants. In response to our community calling on us to act, UNC is working to create a College of Osteopathic Medicine in Greeley to help meet this critical need.

A number of important preliminary steps have already been taken, including the completion of a feasibility study, submission for applicant status with the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), receiving statutory authorization from the State of Colorado to proceed with the project through Senate Bill 22-056, and a national search for a founding dean. The feasibility study, which was conducted by

leading medical education consulting firm Tripp Umbach, validated the demand for new physicians and expanded capacity for medical education. It also assessed economic impact and the capacity and commitment of healthcare providers to support clinical placements. It has been rewarding to see our efforts to create an osteopathic medical college supported by our university community, our trustees, the local healthcare community, and a number of local and state organizations.

Two years ago, the UNC community came together to create Rowing, Not Drifting 2030, our ten-year strategic plan. In that plan, we outline a bold vision to be the institution Colorado looks to as the future of higher education. We have identified five vision elements that guide our work in becoming a leading Students First university. One of those elements is "Innovate & Create," articulating that UNC will capitalize on opportunities to innovate and improve instruction while anticipating and addressing societal needs. Creating this college of osteopathic medicine is one of the ways we will deliver on that promise. The establishment of a medical college at UNC is certainly bold and will be transformative not just for our university, but for Greeley, Weld County, and Colorado.

We are excited to continue pursuing this project in partnership with and in service to our community. I invite you to join us in this important next phase of UNC's history. The opportunity to be involved in a project this transformational is rare and your support is greatly appreciated. I look forward to keeping you engaged as we move forward. I hope you are as excited as I am about the extraordinarily positive impact opening an osteopathic medical college will have on improving access to healthcare in our community, region, and state, as well as what it will do to expand educational pathways for Colorado students who dream to be doctors.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Andy Feinstein in blue ink.

Andy Feinstein

A GROWING POPULATION

Colorado's population grew at nearly twice the rate of the rest of the nation from 2010 to 2020, making it among the fastest growing states—and the second-fastest growing population of people over 60 in the nation. That growth is even more pronounced in Greeley and Weld County where the Greeley metropolitan statistical area was the fastest growing in Colorado and fourth fastest growing MSA in the entire United States according to 2020 census data.

A SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS

Even as Colorado's population increases, the state and nation are facing physician shortages that will worsen over the next decade due to population increases and an aging physician workforce.

- Nearly 300,000 physicians will retire nationally in the next few years.
- The U.S. will face a shortage of as many as 139,000 physicians by 2033. (Association of American Medical Colleges)

In Colorado, those shortages are already acutely felt in rural communities.

- By 2030, Colorado will need an additional 1,773 primary care physicians—a 49% increase compared to the state's 2010 primary care physician workforce. (The Robert Graham Center)
- Only 34.6% of Colorado's need for physicians is currently being met. (U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration)

With growing and aging populations facing declining access to doctors, healthcare providers turn to medical education programs to fill the need for primary care physicians. But Colorado's two existing medical education programs cannot meet the demand and, due to program limitations, have had to turn away thousands of applicants.

A TRUE COLLABORATION

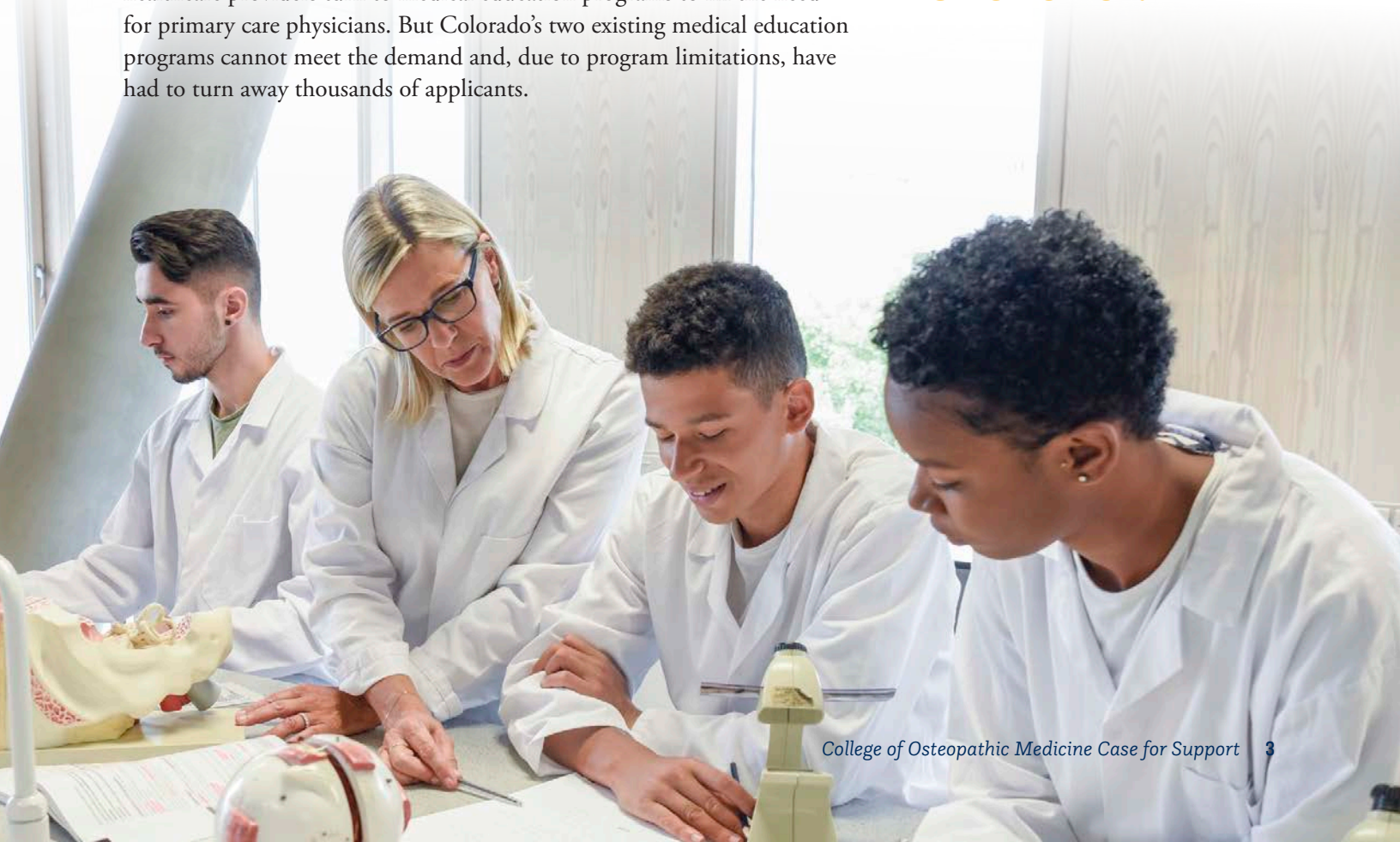


The project has been a true collaboration across several public and private sectors. It will benefit the health of our community, the economy and add to the quality of life in Greeley, Weld County, and Colorado."

MARGO KARSTEN

*Banner Health
Western Region President*

THE HOSPITAL SYSTEMS AND PHYSICIANS IN OUR COMMUNITY HAVE CALLED ON UNC TO ACT.





THE NEW COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

To meet the critical and growing demand for doctors, the University of Northern Colorado is developing a College of Osteopathic Medicine, planned to open in fall 2025 with its first cohort of students.

UNC has long had an intrinsic awareness of the need for programs that can solve some of our community's greatest challenges—whether graduating outstanding teachers or educating skilled and compassionate nurses.

Through the new College of Osteopathic Medicine, UNC plans to enroll 150 graduate-level medical students in a four-year medical degree program each year. These graduate students will go on to complete residency programs and fill critical healthcare needs as fully licensed physicians.

WHAT IS OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE?

Graduates of osteopathic medicine receive Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degrees, where graduates of allopathic medical schools receive Doctor of Medicine (MD) degrees. Both degrees require four years of medical school and students take the same final exams. Additionally, DO and MD students compete for and participate in the same three- to seven-year residency programs.

While allopathic medicine focuses on diagnosing and treating medical conditions, osteopathic medicine takes a more holistic, patient-centered approach and focuses heavily on prevention. Upon graduating from medical school, DOs complete internships, residencies, and fellowships as they prepare to become licensed and board-certified.

**MORE THAN
50% OF ACTIVE
DOCTORS OF
OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICINE
PRACTICE
IN THE PRIMARY
CARE SPECIALTIES
OF FAMILY
MEDICINE,
INTERNAL
MEDICINE, AND
PEDIATRICS.**

WHY OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE AT UNC?

UNC is uniquely positioned—geographically and philosophically—to educate doctors of osteopathic medicine.

The osteopathic medical profession has a long tradition of providing care (and most often, as primary care physicians) where patients lack doctors. Located in Greeley, Colorado, UNC is situated in a region with tremendous urban and suburban growth and surrounded by rural communities where there is a critical need for more doctors.

Philosophically, UNC meets community needs with a caring and inclusive culture and attracts students who seek opportunities to make a difference in the world around them. It's a culture well-suited to osteopathic medicine, where an increasingly diverse physician population uses a unique whole-person approach to help prevent illness and injury.

The development of a College of Osteopathic Medicine will have a positive impact on other health science programs at UNC, including the university's programs in nursing, audiology, public health, biomedical sciences, health sciences, and behavioral sciences.

Developing synergies among osteopathic medicine and these existing programs, as well as strategically investing in their expansion whenever possible, will create new opportunities for students and expand the university's capacity to directly influence the health and strength of communities across Colorado.





AN INCLUSIVE AND GROWING PROFESSION

- The number of osteopathic physicians in the U.S. rose in 2020 to nearly 135,000—an 80% increase since 2010.
- 37 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine are teaching at 58 locations in the U.S.
- In 2021, 67 percent of all DOs were age 45 or younger.
- Female physicians make up 74% of the DO population under 45 years old.
- Six of the 10 U.S. medical schools that produce the most primary-care residents are osteopathic medical schools with campuses in Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

(U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT)

IMPACT

As we work together to address the challenges of access to healthcare for all of Colorado's population, the impact of a College of Osteopathic Medicine at UNC will benefit our communities and state for generations to come and will create career paths for students seeking to make a difference through patient-centered care.

UNC's College of Osteopathic Medicine will be a major driver of the economy, creating jobs and generating millions in annual net impact to the region. The osteopathic medical school will also:

- Expand healthcare access for underserved populations while also building a more diverse healthcare workforce.
- Address workforce needs by expanding numbers of highly qualified doctors who have regional connections and interests.
- Grow the healthcare delivery system in Colorado as a priority. As a result, the quality of life for community residents improves as well as the ability to leverage healthcare cost savings.
- Increase the number of physicians with skills and ability to treat growing mental health concerns locally, regionally, and nationally.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE



Our university was founded 133 years ago in response to the need for teachers in communities across Colorado. Today, we find ourselves positioned to meet another critical challenge that will shape the health, strength, and growth potential of Greeley, Weld County, and the state for many years to come."

ANDY FEINSTEIN, PH.D.
UNC President



When a student graduates from a local high school, college, and medical school and completes residency in the same region/state, the likelihood to stay and practice medicine when they complete residency training is more than 60 percent."

Tripp Umbach 2021 Feasibility Study
for UNC College of Osteopathic Medicine



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The creation of an osteopathic medical school at UNC will develop a much-needed pipeline of physicians to support the region’s growing population. Banner is excited about its role in providing a substantial number of core clinical rotations for third- and fourth-year medical students and giving our current team members that chance to help cultivate the next generation of physicians.”

BRIAN DAVIDSON, M.D., '99

Banner Medical Group Western Region Physician Executive

THE PATH AHEAD

As UNC moves from exploration and vision to the impactful reality of a College of Osteopathic Medicine, it must meet specific requirements and achieve funding goals.

One important hurdle the university has already cleared is securing buy-in for the majority of the clinical rotation sites required for third- and fourth-year students, thanks to a partnership with Banner Health and other local physicians, hospitals, and health care systems.

With the approval of the Board of Trustees, UNC has submitted an application with the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) requesting applicant status and conducted a nationwide search for a founding dean. Additionally, in March 2022 Colorado Governor Jared Polis signed Senate Bill 22-056 which officially cleared the way for UNC to offer Osteopathic Medical Education in Colorado.

TIMELINE

This projected timeline outlines UNC's steps toward accreditation and opening of the college. Each step is dependent on approval from COCA, necessary financial support and achievement of program requirements. This timeline may be subject to change.

SUMMER 2022

Founding dean, Dr. Beth Longenecker, begins vital work to create a business plan, develop the curriculum, support work to secure start-up funds, and collaborates with partners to secure additional commitments for clinical placements and residencies.

SUMMER 2024

UNC may apply to receive candidate status; submits self-study and business plan along with teach-out and escrow agreements to COCA.

SPRING 2025

UNC could receive Pre-Accreditation Status; COCA conducts site visit, clearing the way to recruiting students.

FALL 2026

First class of students could begin in Greeley.



THE DIFFERENCE YOU CAN MAKE

In order to open a College of Osteopathic Medicine, UNC must raise a minimum of \$157,500,000, and secure an escrow fund of \$42,000,000, through philanthropy, state support, partnerships and other sources of funding. Once fully operational, the school will be completely self-sustaining and will, in fact, provide additional operating revenue that can be used to strengthen UNC's existing programs in health and sciences and beyond. The start up price tag breaks down as follows:

CONSTRUCTION BUDGET: \$127.5 MILLION

Physical plant costs including design, construction, and furnishing for the development of a College of Osteopathic Medicine facility will be a minimum of \$127.5 million to accommodate a medical school class size of 150 students per year.

START-UP COSTS: \$30 MILLION

Total start-up costs over the three planning years and first two years of operations equal approximately \$30 million. After this start-up period the college will be self-sustaining.

ESCROWED RESERVE FUND: \$42 MILLION

The accrediting body for osteopathic medical schools, COCA, requires an escrow fund as part of the accreditation process. This fund must be held until one year after the first class graduates, and can then be used for another purpose or returned.

The reserve is intended to provide the COCA with resources to fund teach-out agreements for the matriculated students in the event that the proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine fails during its initial years of operation prior to graduating its first class of students, as well as a modest operating reserve. Since inception of this requirement, no school has ever had to forfeit their escrow. Its existence serves as a guarantee to students enrolling in a new college and assures COCA that the new college is solvent enough to operate efficiently.



More than 130 years ago, a collaborative, community effort of visionary citizens, leaders, and educators made it possible for a young university and innovative faculty to meet a need for teachers in a growing state.

We honor their work by continuing to address the challenges of our city, state, and nation such as the critical need to prepare more doctors for our communities near and far.



Join us as we build a College of Osteopathic Medicine to meet this critical need, change the lives of our neighbors and families, and open doors to students who will make a difference now and for generations of Colorado communities.



UNC

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unco.edu/president/initiatives/osteopathic-medical-college