



New Medical School to Be Established in Northwest Arkansas as Part of Alice Walton’s Vision for Whole Health

Leadership Team Announced for Whole Health School of Medicine and Health Sciences

BENTONVILLE, AR (March 4, 2021) – [Whole Health Institute \(WHI\)](#), a non-profit organization [founded by Alice Walton](#), today announced plans for a Whole Health School of Medicine and Health Sciences (School of Medicine) in Northwest Arkansas.

“The Whole Health School of Medicine will help medical students rise to the health challenges of the 21st century through a reimagining of American medical education that incorporates mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health, the elements of Whole Health, to help people live healthier and happier lives,” said Alice Walton.

“The creation of the Whole Health School of Medicine is a step forward in rethinking systems in our society to achieve better health and well-being,” said Tracy Gaudet, MD, Founding Executive Director of the Whole Health Institute. The core leadership team for the new School of Medicine includes:

- Founding Dean, Elly Xenakis, MD, formerly Vice Chair for Education, the Division Chief of the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Division, and Residency Program Director in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio;
- Executive Vice Dean, Colleen O’Connor, PhD, formerly Associate Dean, Curricular Affairs, at Duke University School of Medicine;
- Vice Dean for Education, Adam Rindfleisch, MD, MPhil, formerly Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and the Medical Director in Integrative Health at University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health.

“I’m delighted to join this innovative new School of Medicine and Health Sciences and help develop a new paradigm for medical education that changes how people’s health is supported to improve outcomes and lower costs,” said Founding Dean of the School of Medicine, Elly Xenakis, MD. “Grounded in a focus on the whole person, physicians of the future will be better equipped to redesign professional care and to empower and support people.”

The School of Medicine plans to break ground on the construction of a new state-of-the-art education and training facility in Bentonville, Arkansas in 2022 and ultimately matriculate its first class of students in the fall of 2024. The school is seeking accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

Building evidence-based approaches, the curriculum will infuse traditional and conventional medicine with integrative techniques and will include biomedical sciences, clinical training, medical entrepreneurship, research, and a capstone with Whole Health principles ingrained throughout. The program is allopathic, meaning graduates will receive a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree.

Health Sciences degrees and certificates will be offered, which may include functional nutrition, mental health, social work, and health coaching; faculty development in Whole Health approaches, and national certification of existing educational programs that align with the principles and practices of Whole Health.

The School of Medicine and Health Sciences will collaborate closely with the healthcare community in Arkansas and beyond and seek clinical affiliations with local inpatient and outpatient providers. Discussions are underway for ongoing collaborations with local providers and members of the Northwest Arkansas Council Healthcare Transformation Division which includes Arkansas Children's Northwest, Community Clinic, Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas, Northwest Medical Center, Washington Regional Medical Center, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Northwest, Northwest Arkansas Regional Campus of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks.

In 2019, the Northwest Arkansas Council released a [report](#) which found that the region lost nearly \$1 Billion per year because people went outside the region for high-level specialty care. The council's plan for addressing this issue included adding 200 additional residency positions, increasing integrative research to attract high-quality physicians and establishing a 4-year medical school.

"Alice Walton's vision begins here in Arkansas with the School of Medicine as an integral part of the growing and vibrant Northwest Arkansas community effort to become a premier healthcare destination," said Nelson Peacock, President and CEO of the Northwest Arkansas Council. "The ultimate aspiration is to provide access to an approach to health that works better for Arkansas and eventually for all Americans."

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Whole Health School of Medicine and Health Sciences

Whole Health School of Medicine and Health Sciences will be a new, independent, degree-granting, not for profit, medical school in Northwest Arkansas that seeks to reimagine medical education in America by creating a pipeline of medical professionals trained in conventional medicine and Whole Health – a new approach to health that equips and empowers individuals to actively optimize their own mental, physical, and spiritual health and well-being in collaboration with an integrated team of healthcare providers.

Whole Health Institute and Chopra Library (wholehealth.org)

Established in 2020 and based in Bentonville, Arkansas, the Whole Health Institute and Chopra Library is a non-profit organization founded by Alice Walton to radically redesign the systems in our society that impact health and well-being with the ultimate goal of making whole health and wellbeing accessible to everyone. As a champion for change and a connector of ideas, Whole Health Institute is actively creating partnerships and programs with numerous other organizations to create a bridge to the future – a future in which our nation has achieved an ambitious, unified vision of health that enables people to live a full and meaningful life.

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