



# VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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## Success, Growth and Collaboration

Joseph I. Shapiro, MD, Dean  
Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine  
Marshall University

Joseph I. Shapiro, MD, was appointed Dean of the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine in March 2012 and officially began his duties with the medical school in July of that year. Dr. Shapiro is a nephrologist with more than 30 years of clinical, teaching and research experience. Previously, he served as Associate Dean for Business Development and Chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Toledo College of Medicine in Toledo, Ohio.

Prior to joining the faculty at Toledo, Shapiro taught at the University of Colorado.

A native of Newark, New Jersey, Shapiro received his medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in 1980. He earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania. After completing a medical residency in internal medicine at Georgetown University, he trained as a fellow in renal diseases at the University of Colorado. He is board certified in internal medicine and nephrology.

The Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine is one of three state-regulated schools of medicine in the state of West Virginia. The school was established in the mid-1970s based on the Teague-Cranston Act – federal legislation that created five medical schools in conjunction with established Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals. It was at this time when Marshall began its long-standing relationship with the Huntington VA Medical Center. In 1975, the West Virginia Legislature appropriated funding for the school and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education granted provisional accreditation in 1977. Our first class entered in January 1978 and graduated in 1981. The school was subsequently named in honor of its major donor, Joan C. Edwards.

From its inception, the school has been focused on the health care needs of West Virginians and those in central Appalachia. This focus pervades the service of our clinical faculty, the topics of research that we pursue, as well as the composition



of our medical school classes. We've learned over the years that students who matriculate with us and hail from the Mountain State are five to six times more likely to ultimately practice in West Virginia, so in-state residency is a major plus for the future of health care in our state, as well as for interested applicants. In fact, the success rate of in-state and out-of-state applicants at gaining admission to our medical school parallels those numbers.



*The Marshall University Medical Center provides a technologically advanced focal point for the clinical teaching, outreach and service programs of the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine*



*Bobby L. Miller, MD, Vice Dean for Medical Student Education and a professor of pediatrics-neonatology, instructs medical students in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Cabell Huntington Hospital*



*2017 graduates of the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine*

Students at our medical school are, in general, more satisfied with their experience at Marshall than students at other medical schools, according to a recent graduate questionnaire. We have maintained a small class size (about 75 students per year), allowing for students to easily connect with their peers and faculty. The success rate of our students on licensing exams, as well as matching into their desired residency programs, is at or above the national average. Our medical school prides itself on having amongst the lowest medical school tuitions in the country for in-state residents, as well as one of the highest rates of graduating primary care providers.

In contrast to many medical schools in larger metropolitan areas, our practice plan, populated by our full-time clinical faculty, provides the majority of physician care in the Huntington region. Although primary care has always been the perceived need for our patient population, our practice plan now spans the continuum from primary to specialty care. In collaboration with our medical school educational programs, we support a range of graduate medical educational opportunities, also called residencies, ranging from family medicine to interventional cardiology.

Substantial growth in these residency programs continues to occur in collaboration

with our major hospital partners, Cabell Huntington Hospital and St. Mary's Medical Center, which are expected to merge this year. We also enjoy an active volunteer faculty that includes the physician staff of the VA Medical Center, as well as physicians from the Huntington Internal Medicine Group, Radiology Incorporated, Valley Health and many other practices. Despite challenges in funding, we have been able to start a number of new residency programs in areas that are of particular need to the region.

The future is uncertain, but exciting. State support of medical education continues to decrease to the point where it is approaching the level of irrelevance. The combination of this state support with our tuition revenues does not reach 10 percent of our overall budget. The main driver of our budget is the provision of clinical services by our faculty. This is similar to most other medical schools. While exciting in that it allows for growth, uncertainty accompanies the fact that, for many of our faculty, the main job for which they are compensated is providing health care, not the performance of research and not the teaching of medical students and residents. Again, this is similar to most medical schools.

We are in a period of unprecedented growth in our clinical, research and educational missions. We currently have more undergraduate and graduate medical education positions than ever before, with the largest clinical faculty we have ever enjoyed. Our scholarly output has doubled over the past five years and all of our educational programs are fully accredited without significant citations or sanctions. On this background, the merger of our major teaching hospitals is anticipated to provide new and additional opportunities for providing care, performing research and training learners. Indeed, this is an exciting time for the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine. ▽