



# VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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## Finding Health

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Dr. Michael Adelman became President of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) in January 2011. He previously was the school's Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean. Prior to WVSOM, he was the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

He has served as the Chair of both the Council of Presidents for the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) and AACOM's Board of Deans. He has also served as both Chair and Co-Chair for AACOM's Annual National Educational Meetings, is a member of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Council on Postdoctoral Training and a member of several other national, state and local boards.

Dr. Adelman received his degree in osteopathic medicine from the Des Moines College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery, followed by a residency in proctology. He also received a DPM degree from the Pennsylvania College of Podiatric Medicine and a law degree from the University of Toledo.

In addition, Dr. Adelman has hosted several local and regional television series and currently is the host of "Abracadabra," a WV PBS television series, which is part of WVSOM's Healthy Children's Initiative.

He was among the first cohort of the AOA/OU-COM Health Policy Fellowship and is a former Chair of the Institute for National Health Policy and Research. He lectures nationally on leadership, medical education issues and hospital and government regulations.

*"To find health should be the object of the doctor.  
Anyone can find disease."*

More than 100 years later, these words from A. T. Still, the physician, surgeon and founder of osteopathic medicine, still hold true today.

Medical schools still teach traditional medical courses, such as anatomy, physiology and pharmacology. The emphasis is still on diagnosing pathology and disease, and implementing proper treatment. However, "cutting edge" medical schools are adding courses on nutrition, effects of exercise and preventive care to proactively make the population healthier. This is a huge paradigm shift in health care! Rather than passively treating diseases when they occur, physicians will be educating their patients on how to live healthier lives and prevent diseases.

At the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM), we have also moved in this direction, both in the education of our students and with an extensive community outreach program. As a part of this program, we host a free blood pressure booth at the West Virginia State Fair. This past year, more than 2,500 people had their blood pressure taken.

A few years ago, we began to survey individuals who came to our booth. The survey asked questions about the individual's general health and about specific diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. The survey also asked each individual to rate their general health, from poor to excellent. The results were enlightening! People who indicated that they had diabetes, lung problems or have had a heart attack also rated their general health as "good to excellent."



This survey made us realize that people fail to understand the impact these diseases have on their overall health. How can you expect people to change their lifestyle when they don't recognize that they aren't healthy?

The insight we gained led us to expand our Center for Rural and Community Health (CRCH) resource center in an effort to provide health education to our communities. We also created our Healthy Children's Initiative to educate our children about developing healthy lifestyle habits at an earlier age.

The CRCH was established to support the osteopathic medical education focus on team-based and patient-centered care, and the integration of prevention and population health to improve quality and efficiency of health care delivery. The CRCH develops programs that contribute to improving health in rural areas by providing education directly to communities, rural providers and students.

Educational activities within the CRCH include the development and implementation of the "Community Health Education and Resource Persons" program, which trains health workers



**Image 1:** WVSOM student teaching Mini-Medical School to community members; **Image 2:** Abracadabra Classroom outreach with elementary students exercising; **Image 3:** the cast of the Emmy nominated television series Abracadabra; **Image 4:** WVSOM student involved in community outreach with seniors

and others to provide health education within communities across the state. In addition, CRCH provides training in chronic disease self-management, diabetes self-management, and chronic pain self-management.

Most recently, CRCH began developing tools to educate physicians, families, school personnel and others about opioid and heroin abuse. In partnership with the local CARxE Coalition, a Prescription Opioid and Heroin Awareness Toolkit was developed and distributed throughout Greenbrier County. The toolkit includes the current CDC prescribing guidelines for physicians and information on various local resources. These packets were delivered to nearly 100 private practices

and clinics to be used when there is a need for referral of substance abusing patients. The CRCH is also involved in grant partnerships to develop programming for neonatal abstinence syndrome, addressing opioid use in minority communities and programming for harm reduction in the southern counties of West Virginia.

WVSOM's Healthy Children's Initiative is a way of providing early education about nutrition, exercise and healthy lifestyles to our elementary age children. Through this initiative, we have begun to impact health care by educating the children and, in turn, having them influence their parents. This initiative has four components: Our EMMY-nominated PBS television series

called *Abracadabra*, which airs weekdays on West Virginia PBS; outreach to schools with direct classroom presentations; live versions of *Abracadabra*; and the use of social media and publications, such as activity books and a healthy snack cookbook. All of these components utilize magic, ventriloquism and original songs to educate children about health, nutrition, exercise, science and safety.

As a medical school, it is our obligation to keep physicians on the cutting edge of medicine. Now, and into the future, this is going to include more training in preventive medicine, and on how to educate patients about living healthier lifestyles. After all, "finding health" should still be the object of today's physicians! ▽