MU, Springfield hospitals explore plan to develop more physicians

S&J Staff

CoxHealth and St. John’s are teaming up with the University of Missouri School of Medicine to tackle the state’s physician shortage.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services estimates that 108 of 114 counties are underserved in terms of physicians, so CoxHealth, St. John’s and MU will spend the next year identifying strategies and resources to increase enrollment at the medical school and expand educational opportunities at both systems’ hospitals and clinics.

“Our goal is to not only produce more physicians and improve patient access to care, but to increase the medical students’ access to quality clinical education in our area of the state,” said CoxHealth President and CEO Robert Bezanson, in a news release.

MU and the Springfield hospitals already have a medical education partnership.

Of the more than 75 students who received medical training in southwest Missouri since 2005 through MU’s rural track program, 48 were trained through the partnership with CoxHealth and St. John’s. The program encourages physicians to complete part of their clinical education in underserved areas and to then practice in Missouri.

“A large part of our service area is rural, so having medical students available in these clinics not only helps them complete their education, it also introduces them to the area and the benefits of practicing here in the Ozarks,” said Jon Swope, president and CEO of St. John’s Health System, in the release. “We are looking forward to possibly expanding many educational opportunities, which benefits both physicians and patients.”

The Association of American Medical Colleges has called on all medical schools to increase class size by 30 percent to address the physician shortage across the country. For each of the past two years, MU has received more than 1,200 applications to medical school, but only has the capacity to accept 96 new medical students annually.
Autism parents haunted by question: Why?

MU mention page 2

By Madison Park, CNN

(CNN) -- The retraction of a controversial study that suggested a link between autism and a childhood vaccine has been little comfort to Joe Dimino.

Dimino, whose 5-year-old son has a type of autism, said it only made him more disillusioned with the medical establishment. While Dimino does not believe vaccines cause autism, he's not entirely convinced the shots are harmless.

The now-discredited study published in the Lancet in 1998 raised the possibility of a link between autism and the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. The study had become a rallying point for many parents questioning the safety of childhood vaccinations.

"We feel like we're getting yanked around with this information -- how can you say something and say sorry 12 years later?" said Dimino, of Belton, Missouri. "That's the way it feels."

It left him feeling "more mistrustful of both 'communities," he wrote in his iReport.

Even without the vaccine-autism controversy, parents of children with autism live with a constant question that no scientist or doctor has been able to answer: Why?

Why did this happen to my child? What caused it? Will he or she get better?

"What happens with a large number of families is they get a diagnosis and there are no answers," said Patricia Robinson, who is a therapist for people with ADHD, autism and Asperger's syndrome. "And what I usually see is parents start really researching for information."

Dimino's son Miles had developmental delays that made his parents suspicious. He had trouble picking up objects. At age 1 ½, he crawled. He could barely spit out words or phrases and had trouble talking.
Has autism touched your life? Share your stories, thoughts

After learning that Miles is in the autism spectrum, Dimino and his wife browsed libraries, ordered countless books and spent hours online learning about autism. Watch Dimino's iReport submission

Marla Collazo of Belleville, New Jersey, spent hours on YouTube, watching everything she could about autism after learning that her daughter, Madison, had the condition.

She started wondering whether her hours at work, usage of the Blackberry and screen time during her pregnancy contributed to her daughter's condition.

"I questioned all things," she said. "Did I eat something I shouldn't have? Did I expose myself to something? You question yourself. You question and you don't know -- and it's like a state of mind."

It plunged her into depression and more questions.

Parents often blame themselves, Robinson said.

"They start looking back and wondering, 'Maybe I should've done something different. Maybe I should've had organic food. I should've eaten more vitamins. I should have not used pesticides. I shouldn't live near this area.'

"There's no evidence to say the child is autistic because the parents did something wrong during their pregnancy or early years," Robinson said. "It's common human nature to look for causes and it is hard on parents, because they do blame themselves."

The constant questioning is understandable, said Dr. Judith Miles, associate director of biomedical programs at the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders at the University of Missouri.

"The things that keep me awake at 2 a.m. are the things I'm puzzling over and things I don't have answers to," Miles said. "I think the reason that people look at vaccines is because of the time correspondence."

The symptoms of autism become more apparent around the age of 2, which is around the same time toddlers receive their vaccinations. This has fueled theories that the childhood vaccinations cause the disorder, but scientists say the timing is coincidental.

"That temporally makes a lot of sense and that's why some families hold on to that," said Miles, a professor of pediatrics and pathology. "I assume it's a coping mechanism. We all have coping mechanisms."
She recalled one patient who repeatedly came to the clinic with one theory after another about why her child had autism.

"It's human nature to want to know why and some people do better on certainty than others," Miles said.

Collazo still wonders: "I wish I knew what it could've been. I really don't know." View Collazo's iReport

She does not believe vaccines contributed to Madison's autism and tries to look toward her progress.

Her 3-year-old daughter does not speak and hardly communicates. She cannot call Collazo "Mommy." She recently started using a sippy cup and began to clap. She also spins and bites herself to the point of bleeding and bangs her head against the wall.

"I have a lot of faith she will get better," said Collazo, an iReport contributor. "I also have to mentally prepare myself that she may not, but it doesn't matter as long as she reaches her personal goal, I'm happy. I know she knows who I am. She loves me -- that's really what's important."

While the Lancet retraction may not sway the parties entrenched in their beliefs, Cynthia Falardeau, an iReport contributor and parent of a child with autism, said parents have more in common that they realize.

"I know that the parents in both camps love their children dearly..." said the Vero Beach, Florida, resident. "As much as parents of children on the spectrum of autism are divided on the topic they are united in their love for their children." View Falardeau's iReport

CNN iReport's Henry Hanks and Jordan Sarver contributed to this report.
MU student has a ‘Jeopardy!’ date

Look for a gold Mizzou sweatshirt when “Jeopardy!” is televised tomorrow: University of Missouri senior Lindsay Eanet will make her debut on the last day of the College Championship quarterfinals.

She'll be vying with students from Yale University and the University of Texas-Dallas, according to the “Jeopardy!” Web site. The college tournament continues next week, and the winner will take home $100,000.

Rules prohibit Eanet from talking about how she did on the game show, which was filmed last month in Los Angeles. She managed to provide some clues for those who tune in, though. Expect her to be well-versed in categories relating to film, music and literature but not so quick on the buzzer in science-related categories.

That said, being a journalism major who has worked for both the Columbia Missourian and The Maneater helped her in several subject areas.

"Being a journalist and journalism major forces you to be informed about a lot," Eanet said. "It’s a discipline that compels you to read a lot and educate yourself and have an innate curiosity to always want to know more about everything. So that’s really beneficial in terms of game play."

Eanet is the second student from the Missouri School of Journalism to get on “Jeopardy!” in less than a year. In May, MU graduate Laura Myers came in third in the championship finals.

Being on the show that requires contestants to answer in the form of a question is a dream come true for Eanet, a longtime fan.

She started watching at age 7, although she’s not sure what lured her to the show because her parents weren’t necessarily fans. Being blessed with a good memory, Eanet said she’s naturally drawn to trivia.

So when she got the call in December that her October audition in Chicago had made the grade, it was tough not to shout it from the rooftop — or, rather, tweet it from the laptop.

“T was so excited. I wanted to tell everybody," she said. "But they said you have to be discreet. It can’t be on the Internet that you made it. ... I had to err on the side of caution. No Facebook status, no tweeting."

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
Change Missouri’s scholarship program to help public universities

By The Kansas City Star Editorial Board

Missouri is fortunate to have a number of first-rate private colleges and universities. The state’s first responsibility, however, is to strengthen its public institutions.

That’s why it’s curious — and wrong — that lawmakers several years ago devised a scholarship aid formula that gives Missouri students more than twice as much money to attend a private school as a public college or university.

Many states reserve scholarship funds for students attending public colleges and universities. But under Access Missouri, a scholarship program for low- and middle-income families, students can receive as much as $4,600 a year to attend a private college in Missouri. Students attending a public institution qualify for only up to $2,150 a year.

Bills in the House and Senate call for an end to the disparity, beginning in 2014. At that time, the maximum amount a student could receive to attend either a private or public college would be $2,850.

This legislation should be passed. Students currently receiving the larger amount wouldn’t be affected. And the state would no longer be sending the message that students who choose a private college over one of Missouri’s public universities deserve a better scholarship.

Submitted by barbshelly on February 3, 2010 - 3:55pm.
Push for military credit at MU continues

A task force has been working to make MU more veteran-friendly.

By Zachary Murdock
Published Feb. 5, 2010

In 2008, Chancellor Brady Deaton created a task force devoted to improving veterans’ affairs on campus. Since then, the task force has been working to make MU a more veteran-friendly campus, with policies that can help make veterans’ returns to college more seamless.

The key issue facing veterans returning to MU is finding a way to get professional military training to transfer as credit at the university. Both active and reserve duty personnel have access to programs designed to help them obtain college credit for their military experience, but many institutions do not universally accept such transcripts.

Faculty Council continued discussions on a proposal to count military service and training as transfer credit at its meeting Thursday. The task force addressing the subject has proposed several changes in policy that should expand veterans' ability to transfer course credits.

The task force, under co-chairpersons Vice Provost for Enrollment Ann Korschgen and biology professor Tom Phillips, has been in charge of addressing particular issues that have hindered any policy change in the past.

Committee member Joe Parcell explained there are still several issues to be considered, including accreditation and the implementation of the procedure.

Another issue facing the task force is whether to make the program retroactive, meaning veterans enrolled at MU would be able to receive transfer credit under the new policy.

"If someone is already on campus and admitted, can they now go back and have some of these military courses counted in their program?" executive committee member Bill Wiebold said. "It seems appropriate to me to allow students who are already here to go ahead and bring those credits in."
The task force continues to work toward a solution for crediting veterans already at MU, but Parcell explained there still needs to be a set procedure to evaluate credit transfers.

"Procedurally, how would this be implemented?" Parcell said. "Would it only include new veteran students, or would it grandfather in existing student veterans?"

Another issue considered by Faculty Council was accreditation for the classes transferred. In the past, courses accredited only by the American Council of Education have not been accepted as transfer credit at MU. With this proposal, certain departments will need to choose which courses can be credited.

"Each of the departments is going to have to look at the potential overlap between ACE courses to see which courses they would accept," Faculty Council Chairwoman Leona Rubin said.

Although some transfer credit has been accepted before, there is no policy to universally accept military transfer credit at MU.

Missouri Student Veterans Association President Daniel Sewell explained the policy would help improve veterans' education, and aspects of military training could transfer well.

"Fields like nursing, communications, IT — students take courses in all these technical fields, many of which could transfer," Sewell said.

As a part of the task force, Sewell has been able to give the committee perspective on the veterans' position on the issue.

"We just wanted the council to take a look at the policy," Sewell said.

The last issue facing the task force is how to inform students affected of any policy changes made and how to make information about what courses transfer easily available.

The task force will continue to consider the policy change and work out the final issues. The proposal will be an action item at Faculty Council's next meeting Feb. 18.
Faculty Council approves changes to MU in the Evening

The council also discussed the finals schedule and attendance.

By Audrey Freiberger
Published Feb. 5, 2010

Faculty Council approved changes to MU in the Evening, discussed possible problems concerning the final exam schedule and talked about excessive student absences at its meeting Thursday.

The council approved the resolution to discontinue the MU in the Evening program as a separate degree-granting program and integrate it into the university's regular academic program. MU in the Evening allowed students and faculty to take classes in the evening. The change to integrate the program was among the recommendations of the MU in the Evening Program Committee, whose chairman is Wilson Watt.

"Wilson's committee was looking at ways of increasing revenues and opportunities," Faculty Council Chairwoman Leona Rubin said.

The committee examined MU in the Evening and made recommendations to improve the accessibility and use of the program as well as increase revenues to the university from the program, according to the committee's final report.

The report found faculty and administrators might see MU in the Evening as competitive with their own department or with other specialized groups offering ways for non-traditional students and other customers to obtain university credits.

"By moving that entity into the bulk of the university, into the provost's office, we now have one program that covers day and night, not a distinct program," Rubin said. "The object is to remove the distinction."

The council also discussed potential problems due to changes in the exam schedule. The schedule places Reading Day on Thursday and the first day of finals the next day.

"Finals week and the last week of the semester are one day in the same week," Executive Committee member Joe Parcell said. "That could be some test overload for students."
The committee is working to look at the issue from the perspectives of both students and faculty, Parcell said. The council sought feedback from students before making a decision.

The council members also voiced concerns about when exams are given.

"We need to emphasize not holding exams outside of exam week," said Parcell. "We're trying to find out how prevalent that is."

The issue of excessive student absences at the beginning of the semester was also discussed.

"A lot of students will sign up for many classes because they want to be sure they get something and then never bother dropping them," Executive Committee member Stephen Sayers said.

A potential fix the council discussed was creating an alert, so if students did not log into myZou or Blackboard in the first two weeks or so, the professor could notify the student to drop the course.

"The Registrar is working on a software program that will interface either with myZou or Blackboard that will allow this to be easy and seamless," Rubin said. "They view it as a possibly a mechanism for retention."
Students, staff reflect on drinking policy

Noce said the bigger issue focuses on MU's alcohol policy.

By Jared Grafman
Published Feb. 5, 2010

Many students said the survey results sent out from the Wellness Resource Center generally represent the average MU student.

The Drinking Age Town Hall Meeting took place Jan. 26. During the meeting, WRC Director Kim Dude said the WRC does not send out surveys during periods of expected high drinking, such as spring break and Homecoming.

Sophomore Peer Adviser Amanda Strickland said she is not concerned about the WRC's polling process regarding alcohol.

"They recognize it's going to happen," Strickland said. "Especially whenever they declare it a wet campus during football games."

Freshman Elsen Desir said information about alcohol use at MU, posted by the WRC in residence halls and around campus, gives an accurate image of MU college students.

"I would have to say with my personal experience the statistics around campus do represent the general body of MU students," Desir said. "Although there are many who drink more and less than the average."

Senior Marina Shifrin said the surveys sent by the WRC are, in general, accurate of the typical college student.

"I think it's great that they have this push to have college students be safe, but at the same time it says, '80 percent of college students value family over drinking,'" Shifrin said. "Of course you are going to value family over drinking but when it comes down to the decision that night, it isn't like you have to decide between the two."

Shifrin said results would be more accurate if the survey focused more on condition instead of value questions, such as, "Would a person rather be the sober driver or get into a car with someone who has been drinking?"
Missouri Students Association President Tim Noce, who attended the town hall meeting, said people should focus on the alcohol policy as a whole, instead of the WRC's surveying practices.

"I think the bigger picture was that everyone agreed there was a few problems with the current policies on campus and in Columbia," Noce said. "I think that now that it's out in the open, it brings new light to the policies students have felt strongly about for a long time."

MU alcohol policy is different than the policy enforced outside MU authority.

Shifrin said the MU alcohol policy in the residence halls is successful.

"The way I see it is if students are drinking underage outside the residence halls, they get arrested and they get MIPS," Shifrin said. "If it's taken care of within the residence hall, they get classes on how to make wiser decisions, which sounds cheesy but personally I would rather not have anything on my record and be in trouble with my hall coordinator."

Strickland said there is a more lenient policy on alcohol usage than on other illicit drugs.

"Residents are allowed to stay in the halls after their first alcohol violation," Strickland said. "Whereas they are put on much more strict probation after say a marijuana bust or something."

Noce said from his past experience it is obvious MU is not a dry campus.

"Right now, we have what many consider a dry campus," Noce said. "I think that is obviously not true, from my past experience and I think I can say that a lot of people feel the same way."
An MU student reported being raped outside the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity last Friday, Columbia Police Department spokeswoman Jessie Haden said.

The victim said she was at a party at Tau Kappa Epsilon around midnight Jan. 29 and was waiting by the front door to catch a ride, Haden said. The victim then said a man from the party took her hand and led her around the house. Haden said the victim tried to pull away but could not.

"She said he pulled down her pants and raped her," Haden said. "(After it happened) she walked down the driveway and caught a ride and left."

The victim did not contact CPD until 8:30 p.m. Jan. 30 and had already gone to University Hospital to receive a sexual assault kit, Haden said. Police were able to collect her clothes from the incident for evidence.

The victim described the suspect to be 5 feet 6 inches but was not able to identify any other features, Haden said. The department does believe there was alcohol involved.

Haden also said officers went to the fraternity to investigate for any possible evidence.

"We didn't find anything that was evidentiary," Haden said. "We handed the case over to the Investigative Division."

It's hard to say whether incidents of sexual assault are more likely to occur at Greek houses, Haden said. A large factor to sexual assaults is the social setting.

"When we talk about acquaintance sexual assault, it is more likely for it to happen where there are young people in a social setting," Haden said. "It's not necessarily because it's a fraternity but because it's where young people get together socially."

The last rape report in Greektown was at Delta Tau Delta on Nov. 7, 2009, Haden said. The victim of the incident did know the suspect and said he was very tall. Haden said it does seem like alcohol was factor as well, but it is unlikely the suspect is the same in both incidents.
"It does not look like it's the same suspect," Haden said.

As of Thursday, there have been no updates in the investigation and no arrests have been made, Haden said.

Greek Life Director Janna Basler, Interfraternity Council adviser Julie Drury and Tau Kappa Epsilon President Mark Hughes could not be reached for comment.

IFC spokesman Danny Ritz said he was unable to provide any additional information.
Honors College Ambassadors propose new registration system

The proposed system intends to attract high-ability students to MU.

By Kaylen Ralph
Published Feb. 5, 2010

The Honors College Ambassadors approached the University Registrar with a proposal to modify the means by which Honors College students register for classes.

According to a letter submitted to the University Registrar by Honors College Ambassador Chairwoman Lauren Hibler, the ambassadors believe a priority-based system for registering would serve as a perk to attract honors and high-ability students during a time when economic and financial strain might serve as a deterrent to attracting high-ability students to MU.

"The Honors College Ambassadors, student representatives of the Honors College, propose modifying the means of assigning registration dates," Hibler said in the letter. "We recommend that students designated as Honors-eligible in each class year be allowed to register before the non-honors-eligible students of their year."

With this proposed system, honors freshmen would register before non-honors freshmen but after non-honors sophomores, the letter stated.

Registrar Brenda Selman approached the Missouri Students Association Academic Affairs Committee with the proposal in an effort to gauge student support for the initiative. Selman presented the rationale for the request as well as a counter-point proposal.

She explained the rationale for the request for the new system as being a perk to attract honors and high ability students by allowing honors students the first opportunity to enroll in the "best" classes before they fill up. She also described the proposal as a cost-neutral benefit, meaning it would require no money, just a re-ordering of the system.

As a counterpoint, Selman disproved the Honors College Ambassadors' claim ACT scores were falling and addressed the fact most Association of American Universities and Big 12 schools do not extend this opportunity to their high-achieving students.
Some of the schools that do participate noted it had caused controversy with other constituents on campus who felt they deserved the same benefit.

After the proposal, Senate Speaker Amanda Shelton said she would need to hear more about the number of students who utilize this opportunity at other schools where it is offered.

"So at this point, I would say we are still gathering feedback and would welcome outside student input before we make a recommendation to the Registrar," Shelton said.

Shelton also mentioned her desire to work with Selman on a number of issues pertaining to registration including a waiting list for students attempting to enroll in full classes, better course descriptions on myZou and a longer enrollment "shopping period."