

Board Meeting
January 19, 2006

ESTABLISH NATIONAL CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS,
UIC COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AT ROCKFORD, CHICAGO

Action: Approve the Establishment of the National Center for Rural Health Professions, UIC College of Medicine at Rockford

Funding: No Funding Required

The Chancellor at Chicago with the advice of the Chicago Senate, the Graduate College, and the UIC College of Medicine, recommends the establishment of the National Center for Rural Health Professions.

In 2000, the Illinois Board of Higher Education granted temporary approval for a period of five years to the National Center for Rural Health Professions (originally named the Center for Rural Health Professions Education, Evaluation, and Research) to operate as a public service and research center at the UIC College of Medicine at Rockford. The period of temporary approval has come to an end and the Center has submitted a proposal for permanent status.

The mission of the Center is to enhance the health of rural populations and communities through partnerships in education, service, research, and policy. The goals of the Center are to: (1) promote careers in health professions and recruit students from rural populations; (2) facilitate maximum retention of all graduates of the Rural Medical Education Program and other health professions programs; (3) identify, reduce, and

eliminate rural health disparities; (4) enhance community capacity to identify, prioritize, and address health needs; (5) enhance faculty research that promotes high quality programs and service for rural populations; (6) develop and implement interdisciplinary teaching models to educate specially prepared health professionals for rural practice; (7) prepare fellows and graduate students in research and health professions with an emphasis on rural needs and issues; and (8) inform policy and influence decision-making regarding allocation and distribution of resources in matters pertaining to rural health.

Both nationally and in the State of Illinois, rural communities are medically underserved. Illinois ranks 8th in the nation for the number of residents living in Health Professions Shortage Areas. Through partnerships and collaboration in research, service, and education, the National Center for Rural Health Professions will target underserved communities and populations in the development of programs and policy to meet their needs.

Since it was created in 2000, the Center has undertaken a number of projects and studies that have impacted Illinois and beyond. Three very different examples include: (1) medical malpractice in Illinois; (2) rural primary care physician recruitment and retention; and (3) use of complementary and alternative medicine by rural populations.

The Center receives internally allocated funds on a recurring basis, and last year received a four-year, \$6.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to establish the Project EXPORT Center for Excellence in Rural Health, which addresses rural health disparities from a multi-faceted approach. The Center estimates that it will receive approximately \$80,000 annually from non-state sources.

The board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval, pending further review by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.