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WMU School of Medicine Groundbreaking

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WMU School of Medicine Groundbreaking
John M. Dunn Remarks
October 12, 2012

Good morning and thank you Hal.

This is our community's initiative. As you look around you today, I hope the size of this wonderful crowd and the celebratory mood gives you an even deeper appreciation of how community-focused this medical school is. We have members of our city and county commission, including Mayor Bobby Hopewell and County Administrator Peter Battani; our legislators Senator Shuitmaker, Speaker of the House Bolger, Representatives McCann, O'Brien and Nesbitt. Please forgive if I have missed anyone, I might not be able to see everyone through the crowd.

The city of Kalamazoo has a rich history of excellence in education, healthcare, research and life science exploration – all of which are assets for the development of a new medical school. It's hard to believe that it has been five years ago this very month of October that community interest in a new medical school was sparked.

Feasibility studies confirmed that Kalamazoo has the necessary building blocks for developing an outstanding medical school. The assets in the community include: WMU – a nationally recognized research university, Borgess Health and Bronson Healthcare – two nationally recognized hospitals, a 40 plus-year history of medical education, multiple outpatient facilities, a strong base of high-quality physicians, a century-long heritage of drug discovery and medical device development, generous community philanthropy, and a vibrant, supportive city.

A new medical school will contribute to the national and local need for physicians and also bring benefits to the state of Michigan and Kalamazoo community. New jobs generate personal income for local residents. Businesses in the wholesale, retail, service and manufacturing sectors benefit from the direct expenditures of the medical school on goods and services. In addition, area businesses are recipients of spending by staff, medical students and their visitors. And, the financial investment to renovate and expand this building in downtown Kalamazoo will mean the School of Medicine will have an immediate impact on the community as well. The 20-month building project will include over 43,400 work days for an average crew of 109 people per day.

For the past four years, several hundred people from across the community and Southwestern Michigan have been involved in bringing the dream of a new medical school to life. As we embark on this next phase of development, I ask for your continued support and commitment to help us realize our potential to improve the health of our community. On behalf of the WMU School of Medicine Board of Directors, I thank you all. This could not happen without you.