

# STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR THE PROPOSED IUPCOM  
**2025**



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## I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The proposed Indiana University of Pennsylvania College of Osteopathic Medicine (IUPCOM) stands as a transformative endeavor, driven by a shared commitment to reshape medical education and healthcare delivery, particularly in rural and underserved areas of Pennsylvania. At the heart of this initiative are the foundational mission, vision, and core values, which do more than define the program—they serve as the bedrock upon which the entire medical, academic, and career-oriented strategies are built. These declarations aren't merely statements; they are the embodiment of the leadership's deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the osteopathic medical education (OME) landscape, drawing from more than 60 years of combined experience.

From its inception, the program has been shaped by the mindful contributions of a diverse group of key opinion leaders, clinical community partners, faculty, staff, and administration, including vital contributions from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). The creation of the proposed IUPCOM reflects a deeply personal commitment to the advancement of healthcare, where the influence of these visionary leaders and stakeholders can be seen in every aspect of the program. It's not just about creating a medical school—it's about closing healthcare access gaps and fostering the growth of primary care in rural Pennsylvania, a vision that is as much about social responsibility as it is about academic excellence.

The strategic goals and objectives of the proposed IUPCOM are fueled by the passionate input of local and regional partners, including those within Indiana County, surrounding counties, the Pennsylvania Mountains Healthcare Alliance (PMHA), and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE). Together, this collaborative effort brings forward an unmatched enthusiasm and an ecosystem of resources—clinical, interpersonal, and educational—designed to nurture a new generation of caring, competent osteopathic physicians. The program's mission extends beyond education; it is a collective effort to inspire and empower leaders who will actively serve the needs of rural and underserved populations, ensuring that future physicians are not only skilled but deeply committed to the communities they serve.

**The proposed IUPCOM isn't simply a college; it's a transformation in the way we educate, engage, and care for the health and well-being of future generations.**







## II. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine, recognizing our roots as a public institution, is to increase the number of community physicians throughout rural and underserved Pennsylvania while creating a national model for rural healthcare. We will fulfill this goal by providing an innovative program of osteopathic medical education that is evidence-based, inspiring, compassion-focused, holistic, community centered, and affordable.

## III. VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine (proposed IUPCOM), in support of our roots as a public institution and our mission, is to become a national leader in the provision of affordable and accessible pre-clinical, clinical, graduate, and continuing medical education with a focus on the development of osteopathic physicians equipped to transform the landscape of rural and underserved primary care throughout Pennsylvania and our nation. To do this, the proposed IUPCOM will become a leader in leveraging both internal and external partnerships to create an interprofessional educational network emphasizing expertise in medical research, community outreach, and evidence-based clinical care to deliver timely, high-quality, and cost-effective medical care to our nation's most under-resourced rural populations.

## IV. CORE VALUES

**Accessibility:** provide access to affordable and comprehensive medical education across the continuum of physician development, with a focus on individuals from rural and socioeconomically challenged backgrounds and from within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE);

**Commitment to the Principles of Osteopathic Medicine:** underscore the four tenets of osteopathic medicine in our research, teaching, and community service foci, with an emphasis on the importance of holistic and self-healing principles.

**Compassionate Care and Service:** inspire compassion in all that we do and aim to transform how medical care is delivered in rural and underserved primary care shortage areas in Pennsylvania, the mid-Atlantic region, and our nation.

**Integrity, Respect, and a Culture of Inquiry:** foster a culture of continuous, lifelong learning with an inherent drive to continually improve and innovate in all that we do; and

**Accountability and Teamwork:** inspire a community of learners with a focus on ethical actions and including the continuum of learners from rural communities.



## V. STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Over the next seven years, the proposed IUPCOM will focus on these strategic goals and objectives, as well as the more granular bulleted performance indicators under each, understanding that this is a living document and is subject to change and review at periodic intervals by stakeholders (e.g., community members, faculty, staff, and our future osteopathic medical students).

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Objective:** Create pipelines to recruit from rural and underserved areas of Pennsylvania and train in rural Pennsylvania to alleviate physician shortages across the Commonwealth.

- Focus recruitment on candidates with strong ties to rural Pennsylvania and expressed desires to serve as an osteopathic physician in rural and underserved areas.
- Establish early pipeline programs, such as a mini-medical school, master’s programs, and community engagement initiatives, to mature the realization and bring mentorship to aspiring healthcare professionals with potential interest in medical careers.
- Offer pre-designated early acceptance opportunities for students within the PASSHE to strengthen state system enrollment and retention in the Pennsylvania physician workforce.
- Develop future physicians and scientists who engage in best practice modalities of health systems science and the humanities to address rural community health.
- Engage with economic development partners in rural communities statewide who align physician expansion with other economic development priorities.

### COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING

**Objective:** Train students in primary and specialty care tailored to meet the diverse needs of rural and underserved communities.

- Implement a curriculum that emphasizes innovative medical simulation technology, primary care skill development, and compassionate interpersonal and interprofessional focused team care and communication.
- Develop a community outreach component where students have deep engagement in community settings where they learn how social determinants of health, particularly in rural areas, impact health status.
- Develop facilities on- and off-campus to support the continuum of osteopathic medical education spanning from the pre-clinical to the graduate medical education years and beyond.
- Integrate mental health and holistic care throughout all stages of the curriculum.
- Develop curricular and experiential learning modalities that address innovative biomedical artificial intelligence and health informatics capabilities to provide competency in clinical practice that facilitate rapid advances in osteopathic medical education, biomedical research, and population health.
- Prepare osteopathic medical students to excel on osteopathic and related licensing exams (e.g., COMLEX-USA examination series, specialty board examinations, etc.).
- Maintain a continuous process of review to professionally develop and improve a culture that is inclusive, respectful, safe, and supportive of personal and interpersonal development and has a secure sense of belonging, well-being, and compassion among osteopathic medical students, staff, and faculty.



## CLINICAL AND GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION (GME)

**Objective:** Establish strong clinical and GME partnerships to support medical education and retention.

- Collaborate with and support affiliated clinical training institutions in rural and underserved areas of Pennsylvania that are committed to professional training to provide robust clinical experiences for our osteopathic medical students.
- Engage with community foundations and economic development partners to raise funds for GME, GME planning, implementation, and ongoing support.
- Develop and support the expansion of American College of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) programs, emphasizing those with ACGME-approved osteopathic recognition, particularly in our region, to facilitate postgraduate training in underserved and rural areas.
- Ensure that our graduates are afforded many GME placement opportunities by supporting and developing ACGME-approved residency programs.
- Support continuing medical education (CME) programs focused on rural health needs.



## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Objective:** Foster a culture of inquiry to advance rural healthcare solutions.

- Encourage faculty, staff, and community partnership participation in discovery and translational science research to improve understanding of health systems science and the intersection of biomedical processes, life circumstances, and other influences of the human condition to advance understanding of human health and mechanisms of disease.
- Provide resident, faculty, and preceptor development, in research training and support, to individuals in affiliated GME programs.
- Develop student research opportunities in medical education, basic science, and interprofessional clinical practice.
- Promote community-driven research and service initiatives to address local and rural health challenges throughout Pennsylvania

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Objective:** Build a sustainable rural-to-rural pipeline by strengthening community partnerships.

- Establish sustainable community-based clinical training sites and programs by collaborating and partnering with community-based healthcare and economic development partners.
- Engage school systems in rural Pennsylvania to expand medical and health science pipelines to increase the number of students interested in healthcare.
- Assist rural clinical sites with physician recruitment and retention efforts.
- Partner with local organizations, state and local legislators, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and industries to align with broader rural health improvement efforts.



# VI. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

## PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

- Establish affiliation and partnership agreements with collaborators who share our mission and support the development of the workforce of osteopathic physicians to serve in rural areas (e.g., partnerships with the members of the Pennsylvania Mountains Healthcare Alliance, Pennsylvania State Hospital System, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, and AHEC).
- Partner with middle and high schools, community colleges, and PASSHE institutions to create a unified pipeline to medical education.
- Streamline pre-medical advising within PASSHE.
- Collaborate with community partners, foundations, and state agencies to develop scholarships and financial incentives for students committed to serving rural communities.

## CURRICULUM INNOVATION

- Develop and mature an evidence-based curriculum focusing on primary care, mental health, and community-centered practice.
- Incorporate interprofessional education to prepare students for collaborative healthcare delivery.
- Enhance wellness and resilience of students with training that focuses on developing skills for growth mindset and well-being.
- Create curricular pathways that support learners who need additional time to prepare for board examinations while building skills that will enhance their practice in rural medicine.
- Emphasize mental health and communication skills with focus on compassion throughout curricular framework and institutional infrastructure.
- Provide academic and psychological support for all students, with additional support tailored to the unique needs of first-generation medical students.
- Provide “off-ramps” for students throughout their medical training, who if either decide not to pursue medical osteopathic training or are unable to complete training, have specialized career counseling options and institutionally supported pathways as alternates to an osteopathic medical degree.

## CLINICAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Establish agreements with rural Pennsylvania hospitals, clinics, and health systems for clinical rotation development and residency placements.
- Provide resources, training, and preceptor development for rural clinical preceptors to enhance teaching quality.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

- Invest in state-of-the-art simulation and standardized patient laboratories and telehealth training facilities to prepare students for modern rural healthcare delivery.
- Implement digital learning platforms to expand access to medical education.

## COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

- Develop community health needs assessments in collaboration with local stakeholders.
- Promote research addressing rural health disparities and innovative care delivery models.



# VII. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## YEAR 1-3

AY 2024-2027; PREPARATION YEARS BEFORE TARGET MATRICULATION AY

- Secure funding and Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) accreditation for the proposed IUPCOM.
- Develop curriculum and hire faculty with expertise in rural and community health.
- Establish clinical partnerships and finalize clinical affiliation agreements.
- Develop mentoring and educational recruitment pipelines throughout rural Pennsylvania.
- Continue development of campus educational facilities, including interprofessional simulation and standardized patient infrastructure, with an emphasis on clinical practice in rural healthcare settings.
- Launch initial research and community engagement projects, with emphasis on rural physician recruitment and retention.
- Support GME development throughout rural and underserved Pennsylvania.
- Create a funding stream and identify sources to make the proposed IUPCOM tuition affordable.
- Establish a program of interprofessional/faculty development for internal and external faculty members.



## YEAR 4

AY 2027-2028; YEAR OF FIRST MATRICULATION

- Enroll the first cohort of osteopathic medical students and implement the osteopathic medical student (OMS) Year 1 curriculum.
- Continue the development of the OMS Year 2 pre-clinical curriculum, as well as the Years 3 and 4 clinical curricula.
- Expand pipeline programs and early recruitment efforts.
- Implement a process of review for quality assurance and improvement for curriculum assessment based on student outcomes.
- Expand research and community engagement projects particularly to serve the rural healthcare needs of Pennsylvania.
- Implement a process of review for quality assurance and improvement for student success, wellbeing, and inclusivity.

## YEAR 7

END OF AY 2030-2031

- Graduate the first class of osteopathic medical students and track their placement in rural communities in Pennsylvania (or wherever their program match occurred for GME placement) and subsequently where they choose to practice osteopathic medicine.
- Expand GME program development and support and CME offerings.
- Evaluate program outcomes and refine strategies based on performance metrics and graduate feedback to drive program improvements.
- Engage strongly with the first class of graduates to foster alumni community support.



## VIII. EVALUATION METRICS

### STUDENT RECRUITMENT

- Focus recruitment on potential students from rural backgrounds or underserved areas in Pennsylvania and PASSHE member schools.
- Diversity of the student body as defined by socioeconomic status, race, gender, and status as a first-generation undergraduate college or medical student.
- Evaluation of an applicant’s undergraduate GPA in the sciences.
- Evaluation of an applicant’s undergraduate GPA in the humanities.
- Evaluation of an applicant’s Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) score(s).
- Evaluation of an applicant’s clinical experience(s) to date, including volunteer and employed roles.
- Evaluation of an applicant’s research experience, community service, and leadership roles.
- Evaluation of an applicant’s personal qualities, including interpersonal communication skills, empathy, resilience, ethical decision-making, and teamwork capabilities.
- Status of an applicant as being underrepresented in medicine.
- Evaluation of an applicant’s additional educational experience (e.g., added degrees or certifications, etc.).

### ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Graduation rates and licensure exam performance (e.g., particularly the COMLEX-USA examination series; specialty college examinations, etc.).
- Student satisfaction, well-being, retention, morale, attitudes, and feedback.
- Student acceptance/placement rates into GME programs, particularly those in Pennsylvania.
- Progression through the curriculum.
- Clerkship clinical performance evaluations.
- Professionalism.
- Communication skills.
- Participation in extracurricular activities.

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Number of graduates practicing in rural and underserved areas of Pennsylvania.
- Community integration, partnerships, leadership, and engagement activities.
- Medical- and medical education-related political activities and influence.
- Improvement in long-term health outcomes of rural Pennsylvania communities.

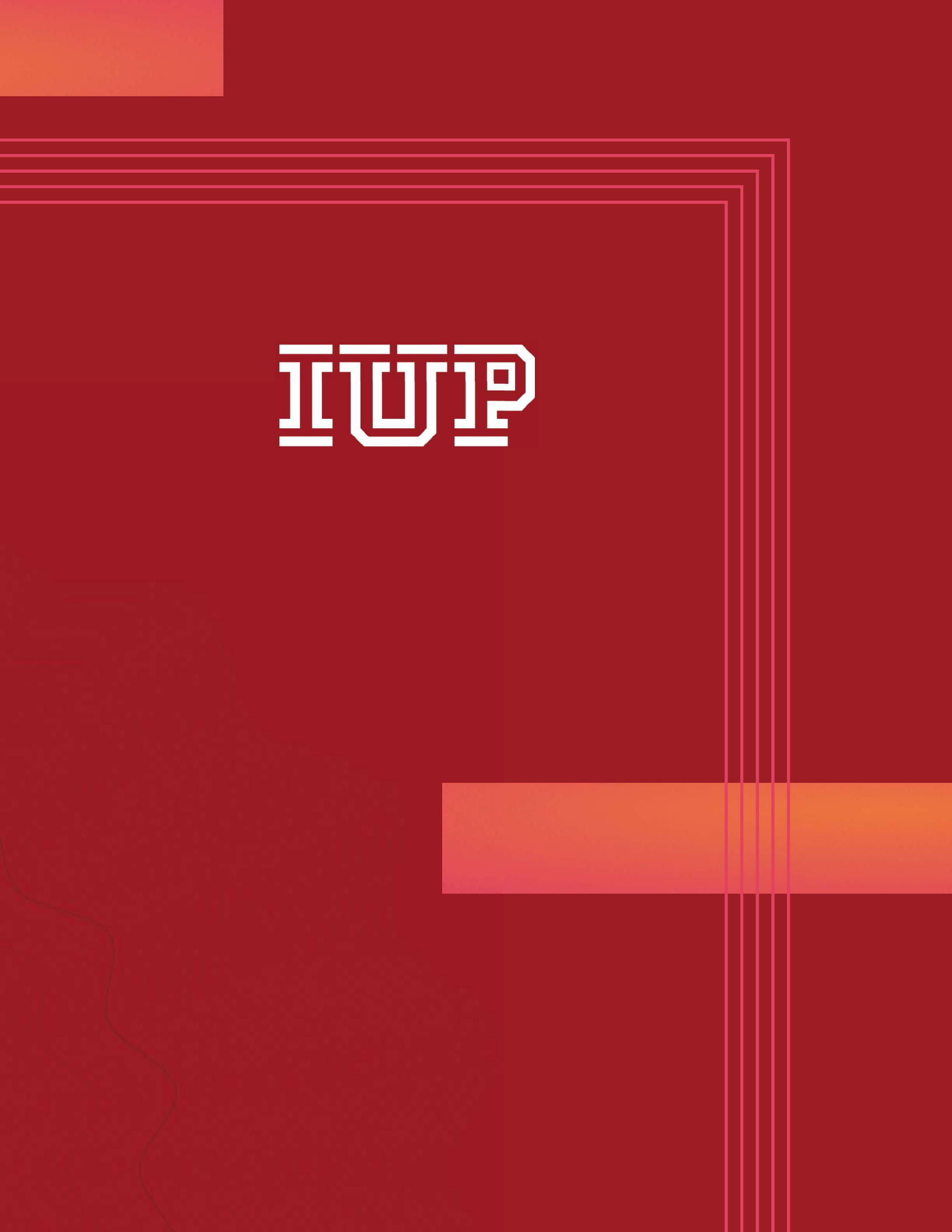
### RESEARCH OUTPUT

- Number and quality of research projects, particularly those focused on rural health; Impact Factor of publications.
- Peer-reviewed scholarly publications and professional presentations by faculty and students.
- Citation count, H-index, and role in research projects.
- Return on Investment (ROI), including human capital (faculty, staff, and students), funding, release time, facilities and other supportive infrastructure, and partnerships.
- Research impact on community health and economics (long-term impact).
- Growth and breadth expansion in IUP and PASSHE research enterprise.
- Research collaborations and awards/recognition.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Increase in local and state physician workforce.
- Financial contributions to rural healthcare systems through partnerships and practice locations.
- Community impacts, including health, healthcare services, and independent rural hospital sustainability.
- Bolster economy of Indiana County and surrounding rural partner communities through expansion of healthcare-adjacent industries and businesses.
- Total contribution through external research and programmatic grant funding.
- Total contribution of the school to the state and local economy through operational spending, student and visitor expenditures, and faculty research grants.
- Expansion of healthcare-adjacent industries such as medical technology, telehealth services, and pharmaceuticals in the region.
- Impact of new buildings, renovations, and associated economic benefits from construction and long-term operations.





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