In January 2010, the Indiana Osteopathic Association announced that Marian University, Indianapolis, would be its partner in creating a new college of osteopathic medicine. The university is working to obtain provisional accreditation status from the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation by the spring of 2011. If provisional status is approved, the school may begin accepting students in the fall of 2012. Partners in the project include Westview Hospital, St. Vincent Health, Community Health Network, Sisters of St. Francis Health Services, and Hill-Rom.

Dr. Paul Evans was selected as the founding dean of the college and joined Marian in September. A U.S. Army veteran of 26 years, Dr. Evans most recently served as the founding dean of the Georgia campus of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He holds a doctor of osteopathic medicine from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Q: Why did you say yes to the challenge of launching a new school?
A: Two main reasons. First, most schools of osteopathic medicine are standalone institutions that are not affiliated with a university. Having the school affiliated with an existing university is appealing because the affiliation will provide opportunities for interprofessional education and faculty sharing. Medicine is now a team sport, so we plan to have the school of medicine and nursing in the same building. This will provide for team-building and improved communication. The dean of nursing and I plan to introduce innovative learning opportunities.

The second reason is the leadership at Marian. The president is moving the university to a higher level. He has momentum and community support.

Q: Why is an osteopathic medical school good for Indiana?
A: Our focus is on primary care, and we have an interest in creating physicians who will serve the underserved areas of the state. Indiana has a worsening primary care physician shortage. By 2020, Indiana will be short 2,000 primary care physicians. Osteopathic physicians are more likely to practice primary care than MDs. We want to be complementary and work collaboratively with the IU School of Medicine and place our focus on primary care.

Q: How do you train the physician of the future?
A: You rely on some predictable directions, such as the expanding use of technology. From computer imaging to robotic surgery, nanotechnology, telemedicine, point-of-care order entry, and advances in genetics, the skillful use of technology will be essential. Simulation is also a tool we plan to use, as well as getting physicians earlier clinical exposures, say in the first and second year.

Q: What is your plan for clinical rotation sites?
A: Our goal is to provide many different types of rotation sites across the state—
from hospitals, to clinics, to surgery centers. We plan to require a rural rotation. Marian will provide faculty development for physicians. They will be provided online learning modules that have a structured curriculum for them to follow. The clinical dean will also make site visits.

Q: What is a college of osteopathic medicine?
The U.S. Department of Education recognizes two schools of medicine to train physicians to provide health care to the public, i.e. colleges of osteopathic medicine leading to a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree and colleges of medicine leading to a doctor of medicine degree. Both require four years of undergraduate medical training, followed by 3–7 years of postdoctoral medical education (residency and fellowship training).

Q: What is a DO?
The difference between MDs and DOs is a difference in philosophy. DOs tend to go into primary care and assess a patient’s physical symptoms in context with their mental and spiritual condition.

The tenets of osteopathic medicine as stated by the American Osteopathic Association include:

▲ The body is a unit; the person is a unit of body, mind, and spirit.
▲ The body is capable of self-regulation, self-healing, and health maintenance.
▲ Structure and function are reciprocally interrelated.
▲ Rational treatment is based upon an understanding of the basic principles of body unity, self-regulation, and the interrelationship of structure and function.