



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

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Department of Human Services, IUP Announce Collaboration to Train Future Physicians in Clinical Setting at Torrance State Hospital, Helping to Address Urgent Need for Rural Health Care Workers

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Torrance, PA – DHS Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh today joined leadership from the **Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP)** to announce the signing of a clinical training affiliation agreement for students at IUP’s proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine at Torrance State Hospital. This partnership with IUP will educate and train future osteopathic physicians in a clinical setting at Torrance State Hospital while also addressing the urgent need for health care professionals in rural and underserved communities.

“I began my career practicing medicine in teaching hospitals in Philadelphia, and I saw firsthand how vital hands-on clinical experience in a real hospital environment was to the medical professionals in training,” said **Secretary Arkoosh**. “It is our hope that this partnership with IUP will give students the skills they need to promote individuals’ health and wellbeing while contributing to their communities’ health and investing in their future careers. I’m grateful for the work staff at Torrance do every day to support Pennsylvanians, and this partnership with IUP will be a vital part of the rural health solution.”

Governor Josh Shapiro is committed to maintaining rural access to quality health care and his [2025-26 budget proposal](#) makes critical investments that build a more competitive health care workforce and address health care access for Pennsylvanians in rural communities, including:

- **\$10 million** for rural hospitals, building off work started with the 2024-25 budget to invest a total of \$36.7 million in state and federal hospitals to support hospitals in rural communities. This investment will also leverage an additional **\$25.1 million** in federal matching funds, bringing total support to **\$35.1 million**.

- An additional **\$10 million** to invest in hospitals statewide, through the Department of Human Services, to assist the Commonwealth in responding to urgent consumer health needs and staffing requirements. This investment will also leverage an additional **\$25.1 million** in federal matching funds, bringing total support to **\$35.1 million**.

“Part of Pennsylvania’s acute and worsening rural health care crisis is a lack of mental health care resources. IUP’s proposed college of osteopathic medicine is committed to educating our students in mental and behavioral health beyond what is standard in the traditional medical education curriculum, understanding that physicians in rural practice are often called on by patients to address mental and behavioral health in addition to other health issues. Training opportunities at a top-notch facility like Torrance State Hospital will greatly enhance the student experience and benefit patients,” said **IUP President Dr. Michael Driscoll**.

IUP’s Proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine at Torrance State Hospital

Torrance State Hospital is one of DHS’ six state hospitals that provide inpatient services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness in a supportive and restorative environment. Staff at Torrance provide patients with the opportunity for rehabilitation, growth, and coping skills and strategies to manage their illness. Torrance collaborates with county programs, behavioral health providers, family members, and advocates to help individuals receive inpatient treatment with the goal of returning individuals to their communities to continue treatment in the least restrictive setting.

Torrance also operates one of DHS’ two forensic units for people involved in the justice system who are court-ordered to competency restoration treatment and the Sexual Responsibility and Treatment Program, which provides behavioral health and sex offense-specific psychiatric treatment for young adult offenders who age out of juvenile programs but are found by a court to still be at risk of re-offense.

The training agreement with Torrance State Hospital supports both DHS’ and IUP’s broader mission to serve Pennsylvania communities and ensure access to quality health care for all.

IUP’s proposed College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) will be dedicated to addressing the urgent need for health care professionals in rural and underserved communities, and with its partnership with Torrance State Hospital, the college aims to educate and train future osteopathic physicians committed to improving health outcomes in these areas.

IUP’s COM students will be trained in both traditional medical practices and osteopathic principles, providing a well-rounded understanding of patient care. The COM will specialize in training physicians who will be well-prepared to meet the unique challenges of rural health care and will offer a curriculum that emphasizes practical, hands-on clinical experience, community engagement, and a holistic approach to medicine.

National studies show that graduates from programs of osteopathic medicine are more likely to pursue primary care in rural and underserved areas—57 percent of all doctors

of osteopathic medicine practice as general practitioners, and more than 20 percent of DO graduates practice in rural areas.

In addition to Torrance State Hospital, IUP has clinical training agreements with Conemaugh Nason Medical Center, Penn Highlands Healthcare, Clarion Psychiatric Center, Armstrong County Memorial Hospital, Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center, Broad Top Area Medical Center, Hyndman Area Health Centers, Nulton Diagnostics and Treatment Center, The Primary Health Network, Indiana Regional Medical Center, and Punxsutawney Area Hospital.

Supporting a Robust System of Care in Rural Communities

Pennsylvania hospitals are facing significant challenges, including shortages of health care professionals in rural areas, and IUP's partnership with DHS at Torrance State Hospital is just one part of the Shapiro Administration's work to support our rural health workforce and providers serving these communities.

Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 proposed budget further seeks to invest:

- **\$10 million** to expand behavioral health loan repayment programs, ensuring providers are available statewide – including in rural communities – to meet the growing demand for mental health care and address a critical workforce shortage.
- **\$5 million** to expand the Primary Care Loan Repayment Program offering loan repayment for health care providers that serve in rural communities.
- **\$20 million** to provide patient safety and support to hospitals in a new dedicated appropriation, to address barriers to care like affordability, transportation and reliable providers.
- **\$5 million** to educate, train, and recruit nursing professionals through tuition support, ensuring a steady pipeline of highly trained professionals.
- **Enhancing postpartum depression screening** and intervention efforts to ensure timely and equitable access to maternal and mental health care for mothers.
- **Encouraging legislation to grant full practice authority to nurse practitioners** who have worked under a physician for three years, increasing access to care in underserved communities.

More information can be found at dhs.pa.gov.

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