

## Bay College announces new partnership with MSU

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ESCANABA — Representatives of Bay College, Michigan State University's College of Human Medicine, and several universities across the Upper Peninsula met in Bay's Student Services Center Thursday to announce a new partnership between Bay and MSU.

Bay will be joining MSU College of Human Medicine's ongoing Early Assurance Program (EAP). Under this program, students from Bay College who graduate from the school with an associate's degree in science and transfer to Lake Superior State University, Michigan Technological University, or Northern Michigan University as undergraduate pre-medical students will have an increased chance of being accepted to the Col-

lege of Human Medicine.

Dr. Aron Sousa, senior associate dean for academic affairs for the College of Human Medicine, said undergraduate students accepted to the EAP after applying in their junior year are guaranteed enrollment in the College of Human Medicine. The program was designed to assist students, working toward helping medically underserved populations, deal with the competitive nature of medical school applications.

In 2015, the College of Human Medicine received a total of 6,845 applications for 190 first-year student openings. However, up to 31 of these 190 seats are reserved by the college each year for EAP students in the hopes of increasing access to medical services in underserved communities.



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Michigan State University College of Human Medicine student Jessica Thompson speaks about her experiences with the Early Assurance Program at a Bay College press conference Thursday.

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## Partnership: Bay College and MSU

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"It's an honor to be a part of our community and work towards that goal," Sousa said.

Graduates of low-income high schools, students eligible for or receiving an undergraduate PELL or institutional need-based grant, graduates from urban or rural areas underserved by health professionals, and students interested in high-need medical fields or practicing in underserved areas are given preference for EAP admission.

The partnership with Bay is not MSU's earliest connection to Escanaba's medical services, according to CEO and Community Assistant Dean of the MSU College of Human Medicine — Upper Peninsula Region William Short, M.D. About 40 years ago, the school started sending students from the Upper Peninsula Region campus to Escanaba for training. This program, which made Escanaba one of the first rural medicine training sites in the country, was met with strong support from the community.

Though Marquette General Hospital's eventual transition to a regional center meant most students were sent to study there instead, the school still sends some medical students to train in Escanaba.

Jessica Thompson, a current



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From left to right, Lake State Superior State University President Thomas Pleger, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine Dr. Aron Sousa, College of Human Medicine student and Early Access Program participant Jessica Thompson, Michigan Tech Director of Pre-Health Programs Stacy Cotey, Northern Michigan University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Kerri Schulling, and Bay College Dean of Arts and Sciences Dr. Matt Baron attend a press conference held at Bay Thursday.

College of Human Medicine student accepted through the EAP, spoke about her experiences with the program at the conference. Before attending the College of Human Medicine, Thompson studied at Michigan Tech.

"I cannot say enough good things about the program," she said.

Tom England, president of the Bay College Board of Trustees, said he expects the program to have a large and positive effect on Bay Col-

lege.

"What this is is a game-changer," England said.

LSSU President Thomas Pleger, Michigan Tech Director of Pre-Health Programs Stacy Cotey, and NMU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Kerri Schulling also spoke at the event.

After the conference, state Sen. Tom Casperson said he felt this agreement will have a major impact on healthcare in the area. He also said he

believes it could encourage U.P. colleges to continue working together.

"I think the collaboration is exactly what's needed," he said.

Dr. Matt Baron, Bay College dean of arts and sciences said the college's staff is looking forward to working with MSU and other schools on this program.

"Bay College is excited to be a partner in this cooperative program of pre-med education," he said.