





A group of medical students in scrubs are posed in a clinical setting. In the foreground, a woman in teal scrubs stands with her arms crossed, looking towards the camera. Behind her, several other students in teal and blue scrubs are standing and sitting. The background shows a sink and a window with greenery outside.

# Cleveland OU-HCOM Opens

*OU-HCOM Class of 2019  
is the largest in the college's  
history and one of the largest  
classes of incoming medical  
students in the state*

By Rebecca VanderMeulen  
Photos by Joel Price

Nicole Zell was a general-practice attorney while her husband, Joe, studied at Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine. But taking on personal-injury cases and drafting wills and trusts didn't seem right. Practicing law included too much research and too little human contact.

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“We take an osteopathic approach to the admissions process. We don’t just look at one number.”

– Isaac J. Kirstein, DO  
Dean, OU-HCOM Cleveland



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“I didn’t feel like I was making a difference,” she said.

Zell, 30, decided to follow her husband to the Heritage College. That desire was cemented while Zell was pregnant with her second child, Zoey, now nearly 2 years old.

In the later stages of pregnancy, Zell was rear-ended in an auto collision. Zoey shifted in her uterus. While being treated for that, Zell told her doctor she had trouble with migraine headaches. After two OMT sessions, she said, the migraines stopped.

She was even more excited to learn that the college was opening a campus at South Pointe Hospital in the Cleveland suburb of Warrensville

Heights, about a half hour from her hometown of North Royalton.

While her husband completes his rotations, Zell is one of the first 51 students at the Heritage College Cleveland. As an Ohio native who’s committed to osteopathic medicine and dreams of being a primary physician in her home state, Zell is exactly the type of student the campus’ founders were hoping for.

### Three campuses, one college

For more than three decades, South Pointe, a Cleveland Clinic teaching hospital, formerly known as Brentwood Hospital, has hosted Heritage College students during their third- and fourth-

year rotations.

In 2012 the Heritage College and Cleveland Clinic announced their plans to open a new campus at South Pointe. Cleveland Clinic wanted to expand its primary care base, and the Heritage College was looking to expand its footprint to train more primary care doctors for Ohio. The idea for the partnership was sparked a year before at meetings between Robert S. Juhasz, DO, president of South Pointe, David L. Bronson, MD, former president of Cleveland Clinic’s regional hospitals, and Jack Brose, DO, who was then dean of the college.

Transforming a hospital built in the 1950s into a 21st century medical school cost more than \$50 million: \$36



Isaac J. Kirstein, DO,  
Robert S. Juhasz, DO, and  
Kenneth H. Johnson, DO,  
with the OU-HCOM  
Cleveland students,  
July 8, 2015.



million from Ohio University toward renovation and expenses relating to faculty, staff and operations; \$13.4 million from Cleveland Clinic for capital improvements and renovations, staff and operational support, and medical education; plus another \$5 million grant from the Brentwood Foundation. Renovations included 60,000 additional square feet of classroom, lab and study space, along with a clinical training and assessment lab with 13 exam rooms.

"From the start, they were interacting with patients," said Juhasz, who noted the students will also work on community outreach efforts such as immunization and eye-exam clinics.

Kenneth H. Johnson, DO, executive

dean of the Heritage College, said each campus is a distinctive piece of the college. "It's three campuses, one college," he said.

The first day for students at the new Cleveland campus was July 8, but the entire class of 240 students was in Athens for two days prior for the Class of 2019 orientation. The incoming class has 139 students in Athens, 51 at Cleveland, and 50 at the Dublin campus, which opened last year. It is the largest class ever in the College's history and one of the largest classes of incoming medical students in the state of Ohio. The entire class reunited for the annual Convocation & White Coat Ceremony, July 25, in Athens.

Classrooms on all three campuses —

Cleveland, Athens and Dublin — are linked through a videoconferencing system that allows students to interact during simultaneous lectures.

"Whenever students start speaking, the camera points at them and everyone can see," said Isaac J. Kirstein, DO, dean of the Cleveland campus.

However, the curriculum emphasizes gathering students in teams to work on case studies, rather than lectures. The Cleveland campus also plans to practice competency-based education, which enables students to master skills at their own pace.

And in 2018, Heritage College and Cleveland Clinic plan to inaugurate a six-year osteopathic medical training

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program that combines medical school and residency. The first class is expected to include eight current students from the Cleveland campus.

The program will save students one-quarter of the time and money required for osteopathic education. It will integrate population health management, team-based care and leadership.

## Primary care for Northeast Ohio

The main goal of the expansion is to boost the number of primary care physicians in Northeast Ohio. The presence of Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals and Case Western Reserve University means there are plenty of doctors in the seven-county region. But there are just over 2,400 primary-care providers for about 2.77 million people, according to the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program.

"There's not a shortage of physicians. There's a shortage of primary care



physicians," Kirstein said. "If you want to treat sick people, you need a lot of specialists. If you want to keep Northeast Ohio healthy, you need primary care physicians."

He noted the Heritage College's track record of training doctors who stay in Ohio — nearly 60 percent of alumni practice in the state — and said the

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HealthSource of Ohio is a private not-for-profit leader in comprehensive primary care delivery; since 1976 we have grown to sixteen centers throughout Southwest Ohio.

## HOW HEALTHCARE SHOULD BE

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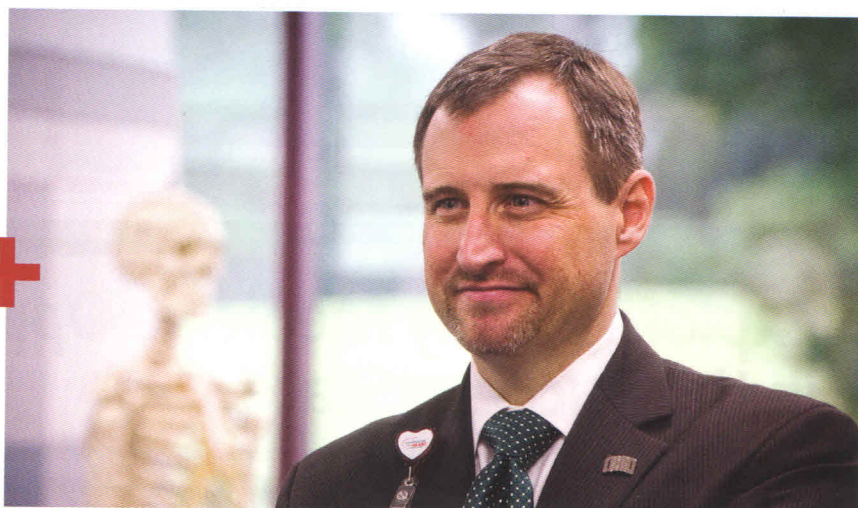


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## MEET OU-HCOM CLEVELAND DEAN ISAAC J. KIRSTEIN, DO



The dean of Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine's new campus in Warrensville Heights wasn't admitted to medical school the first time he tried.

Isaac J. Kirstein, DO, was the first in his family to attend college, earning a bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1992.

As he was finishing college, Kirstein's father had a recurrence of cancer that he did not survive. That loss was reflected in Kirstein's medical-school applications — and ironically, helped forge his future as a DO.

Kirstein recalls lamenting to an MD who was a mentor of his at Wisconsin about how doctors approached his father: "Everyone treated him like a bunch of tumor cells, not a person."

Kirstein's professor said he sounded like an osteopathic physician and encouraged him to apply to medical school again.

In 1997, Kirstein earned his DO from Midwestern University Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Along with practicing, he has held administrative positions with the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine and Midwestern University. Before joining OU-HCOM in 2013, he worked for Franciscan St. James Health in suburban Chicago, where he served as director of medical education and then chief medical officer. He was also a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission for the Advancement of Osteopathic Medical Education, a 24-member panel created by the American Osteopathic Association and American Association of Colleges

of Osteopathic Medicine to develop an innovative model for educating physicians that would help address the nation's shortage of primary care doctors.

Heritage College Executive Dean Kenneth H. Johnson, DO, was delighted to see Kirstein apply for the dean position. Kirstein's style is perfect for Cleveland Clinic's team-based approach, he said.

"He's a significant leader, a great thinker," Johnson said. "He really likes to pull together and work through teams."

The dean's post at the Heritage College gave Kirstein a chance to combine his passions. "I love osteopathic medical education," he said. "And I love making a difference in a community, and a difference in a health care system."



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college's admissions office recruited students who want to put down roots nearby. His hope is that 70 percent of graduates stick with primary care, and 70 percent stay in Northeast Ohio.

Out of the 51 students, 39 have permanent addresses in the region. All but one hails from the Buckeye State.

"We take an osteopathic approach to the admissions process," Kirstein said. "We don't just look at one number." One factor was a question on the Heritage College application, asking prospective students to rank their choices among locations in Cleveland, Athens and Dublin.

Zell, for one, was excited to return to the Cleveland area and hopes to work in family practice. "I like the ability to see patients from babies all the way to geriatrics," she said.



## Explore Family Medicine Opportunities in the Buckeye State

Genesis HealthCare System has several employment opportunities for Family Medicine physicians throughout its six-county service area in Southeastern Ohio, serving a population of 230k. Headquartered in Zanesville, just 45 minutes east of Columbus via I-70, the system includes a not-for-profit hospital, multiple outpatient centers, 3,000 employees, and an extensive network of over 300 physicians representing most specialties.

This family-friendly region offers the perfect work-life balance of suburban and rural settings with easy accessibility to the big-city amenities in Columbus, Cleveland or Pittsburgh.

Genesis is looking for dedicated Family Medicine physicians to expand its network of primary care practices and provide access to excellent clinical care in a variety of community settings.

### Genesis offers

- Patient-centered medical care
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