



**JACKSONVILLE  
UNIVERSITY**

# NEWS RELEASE

## **LECOM Announces Plans to Open a New Campus at Jacksonville University**

*LECOM to seek national accreditation and plans to break ground on new facility in 2024  
Inaugural class of medical students to begin coursework in 2026*

**Jacksonville, Fla. – November 30, 2022** – The Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) announced today a new partnership with Jacksonville University to establish a four-year medical school in northeast Florida that will become LECOM at Jacksonville University.

LECOM President and CEO John Ferretti, D.O., stated: “Since our inception 30 years ago, LECOM strives to meet the need for highly trained physicians in the markets we serve and throughout the country. Partnering with Jacksonville University to establish our fifth campus will produce doctors and skilled health care workers that will serve northeast Florida and beyond.”

The medical school will be supported by long-term clinical agreements with the region’s preeminent healthcare providers, including Baptist Health, Flagler Health+, and AdventHealth.

“Jacksonville has become a globally recognized healthcare hub and will now be enhanced by a four-year medical school that can deliver a pipeline of talented physicians to meet the healthcare needs of a growing population,” said Jacksonville University President Tim Cost. “Jacksonville University is honored to partner with LECOM and our outstanding hospital partners to bring the largest medical college in the country to northeast Florida. We believe this will help propel our region to the forefront of the world’s healthcare system.”

Founded in 1992, LECOM is a leader in innovative, student-centered medical education that produces more primary care physicians than any other U.S. medical school, as recognized by *U.S. News & World Report*. LECOM also offers the lowest tuition among private U.S. medical schools.

On October 12, 2022, LECOM officially filed its formal application with the industry’s governing accrediting body, the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, to establish its fifth campus, “LECOM at Jacksonville University.” The medical school expects to welcome an inaugural class of approximately 75 medical students to its Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) program in 2026, with total enrollment growing to nearly 150 students per year within five years.

To support this expansion, LECOM plans to build its new education facility within the Jacksonville University Medical Mall, an expanding mixed-use healthcare plaza established at the north end of the university's Arlington campus along University Boulevard North. In addition to the forthcoming LECOM facility, the venue features the University's 104,000-square-foot Health Sciences Complex and its School of Orthodontics Teaching Clinic; Jacksonville University's Occupational Therapy teaching facility for immersive clinical training; and the 146-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility, Dolphin Pointe Health Care.

"With the addition of LECOM at Jacksonville University, we expect to be a thriving home for medical students, faculty and staff, all of whom will need places to study, live, eat and socialize and that will drive economic growth in the surrounding area," said President Cost. "Tapping into our network of community connections, Jacksonville University plans to play a central role in attracting private investment to build out supporting housing, restaurants and other businesses and amenities for this growing area."

As the official clinical education partners for LECOM at Jacksonville University, Baptist Health, Flagler Health+, and AdventHealth will accept 3rd- and 4th-year medical students for training in their regional facilities. Additional clinical partners include Island Doctors, Wekiva Springs Center, and Angel Kids Pediatrics.

"Baptist Health combines a long-term commitment to providing high-quality, comprehensive care for every stage of life with a vision of promoting a lifetime of health," said Michael A. Mayo, DHA, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer, Baptist Health. "We see tremendous value in expanding our residency program to incorporate more medical students from this excellent program at JU, which focuses on promoting health and preventing disease."

Osteopathic medicine is one of the fastest-growing healthcare professions. Built on the philosophy that physicians should treat the whole patient, rather than just symptoms, osteopathic medicine takes a holistic approach to healthcare that focuses on health promotion and disease prevention. According to the Osteopathic Medical Profession Report, the number of osteopathic physicians in the U.S. climbed to nearly 135,000 in 2021 —an 80 percent increase over the past decade. Today, one in four medical students in the U.S. are training to be osteopathic physicians.

Still, the nation faces a critical physician workforce shortage. According to a report by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), only 32 percent of Florida's population has adequate primary care, and nearly half of primary care physicians are expected to retire in the next 15 to 20 years.

LECOM at Jacksonville University joins four other locations around the country, including Bradenton, FL, Elmira, NY, Greensburg, PA, and the original site in Erie, PA. Additionally, LECOM has developed clinical education teaching agreements with more than 100 hospitals and clinics throughout 10 states, including more than 10 existing agreements with providers in Florida.

### **About LECOM**

LECOM is the largest medical school in the country and was established as the 16th College of Osteopathic Medicine in the nation in 1992, with a charter class in 1993 in Erie, Pennsylvania. In

2004, LECOM developed the first branch campus in Bradenton, Florida, with two additional locations followed in 2009 at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, and in 2018 at Elmira, New York. The mission of the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine is to prepare students to become osteopathic physicians through a program of excellence in education, research, clinical care, and community service to enhance the quality of life through improved health for all humanity. LECOM is dedicated to serving all students through an innovative curriculum and the development of postdoctoral education and interprofessional experiences.

### **About Jacksonville University**

As northeast Florida's premier private institution of higher education, Jacksonville University is consistently recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the Best Regional Universities in the South. Founded in 1934, the University offers more than 100 majors, minors, and programs, including in-demand degrees in Nursing, Business, Marine Science, Engineering, Finance, and Psychology, as well as those in the highly specialized fields of Aviation, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Film, Animation, and Healthcare Administration. With its five colleges, eleven schools and four institutes, Jacksonville University's 235-acre riverfront campus is minutes from downtown and from beautiful area beaches.

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