Ross University of Medicine Celebrates its 40th Anniversary

40-YEAR HISTORY FACT SHEET

Established in 1978, Ross University School of Medicine (RUSM) is led by Dean and Chancellor, Dr. William F. Owen, MD, FACP. RUSM has graduated more than 14,000 diverse alumni.

Here's a look back at some momentous occasions in the history of RUSM:

- **RUSM – A Frontier in Medical Education**: Founded in Portsmouth, Dominica as the University of Dominica School of Medicine by entrepreneur Robert Ross, the institution initially held lecture classes in the Castaways Motel with less than 20 students in the first graduating class of 1980.
- **RUSM Campus Relocates**: In 1979, Hurricane David hit Dominica, leading to the evacuation of RUSM students, faculty and colleagues from campus. Classes temporarily resumed stateside at George Washington University.
- **An Infrastructure is Built**: In 1981, classes and laboratory exercises were held in a newly constructed academic building on RUSM's campus.
- **Sister Vet School Opens its Doors**: In 1982, Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (RUSVM) opened, which originally shared RUSM’s Dominica campus and later moved to the nearby Caribbean island of St. Kitts.
- **RUSM Gives Back**: Founded in 2002, the Salybia Mission Project was established as a student-founded and run organization that provides much needed care to the population of Dominica, including school health education, community health clinics and elderly care. This initiative has continued for nearly 20 years.
- **RUSM Offers MERP**: In the early 2000s, RUSM started offering a medical education readiness program (MERP), designed to provide aspiring medical students with a strong foundation in the basic medical sciences.
- **RUSM Campus Expands**: Much to the students' excitement more “comforts from home” were added around the campus, including a Subway restaurant in 2007 and an IGA in 2011. In 2015, RUSM opened a new Student Center, which became a feature building on campus.
- **RUSM Campus Relocates**: In fall 2017, Hurricane Maria triggered a campus evacuation for the RUSM for students and faculty. Classes resumed mid-October aboard the GNV Excellent, a ship which was reconfigured as an educational venue. In January 2018, RUSM began operating at two temporary campuses – in Frigate Bay, St Kitts and Knoxville, Tennessee while damage assessment continued at the campus on Dominica.
- **Expanded Educational Programs**: Starting in September 2018, RUSM is offering students the opportunity to pursue a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree through Chamberlain University College of Health Professions (Chamberlain). This program will provide students with a broader prospective as practicing physicians within the
healthcare community and as a part of the organization of working in hospitals from an administrative lens.

- **Celebrating 40 Years:** To commemorate its 40-year anniversary, RUSM recognized its first graduation class of 1980 at the most recent White Coat Ceremony in June 2018. This is an important rite of passage for first-semester students where they are donned with white coats—the garment traditionally worn by Doctors of Medicine. Additionally, through the end of 2018, RUSM is celebrating this significant milestone community-wide, honoring its past, present and future with campus events, profiles on Facebook and an interactive timeline and video, documenting the past 40 years on the RUSM website.

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