

NYU's free medical-school tuition could funnel more doctors to primary care

Notes & Cues:

Article:

Medical school costs a lot of money that a lot of people don't have. That often means students do a bit of cost-benefit analysis: Is it worth it to take on hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt now for the possibility of making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year later?

New York University's School of Medicine is trying to remove that calculation as a factor in students' career decision making. The school announced yesterday that it will provide all new, future, and current students a full-tuition scholarship—financial need and merit aside, meaning wealthy students and low-income students alike will receive it. The scholarship doesn't cover the rest of the costs associated with college—housing, food, child care—but it takes \$55,018 a year out of the picture.

"This decision recognizes a moral imperative that must be addressed, as institutions place an increasing debt burden on young people who aspire to become physicians," Robert Grossman, the school's dean, said in a statement. "A population as diverse as ours is best served by doctors from all walks of life, we believe, and aspiring physicians and surgeons should not be prevented from pursuing a career in medicine because of the prospect of overwhelming financial debt." The school will need to raise \$600 million to fund the project—\$450 million of which it says has already been raised.

"Tuition-free medical education goes beyond the merit and financial scholarships, and debt cancellations that other academic centers have traditionally favored," Rafael Rivera, the associate dean for admissions and financial aid at the medical school, said in a statement. "More importantly," he continued, "it addresses both physician shortages and diversity."

Summary: