Our medical alumni are examples of Brown’s truly global reach, for they have sought to improve human health around the world for the past four decades. This building will be not only a symbol of all that has been accomplished in that time, but the guarantee that Brown physicians will pursue their noble endeavor for the next four decades, and beyond.”

Edward J. Wing, MD
Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences, Brown University

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The Medical Education Building

The last four decades in Rhode Island have been marked by innovations in medical education and clinical care, thanks to Alpert Medical School—the state’s only school of medicine—and its seven teaching hospital partners. Together they constitute Rhode Island’s academic medical centers, which not only provide world-class care to the state’s citizens, but contribute to its economic growth and stability. Here’s a snapshot of the School.

NEW DOCTORS FOR A NEW DAY

In 2009, 11 students in the entering class were from Rhode Island, and 12 graduates chose to remain in Rhode Island for their residency training.

In 2008 in Rhode Island:
• The total economic impact of academic medicine exceeded $1.7 billion.
• The total out-of-state medical visitor impact was $139 million.
• The state government revenue attributable to academic medicine was $218 million.
• The medical school and its seven teaching hospitals attracted close to $170 million in external research funding.
• The health care industry was the state’s largest employer, representing more than 70,000 jobs.

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Brown University has embarked on one of the most exciting milestones in its history: the transformation of a Jewelry District landmark into a state-of-the-art home for Alpert Medical School.

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Brown University has embarked on one of the most exciting milestones in its history: the transformation of a Jewelry District landmark into a state-of-the-art home for Alpert Medical School.
Creating a state-of-the-art home for the Warren Alpert Medical School is one of Brown’s highest priorities. The planned facility – a renovation of an existing building – will provide the School with a physical identity that complements its growing stature on the national scene. The new space is critical to accommodating the School’s planned expansion – Brown’s response to an initiative led by the Association of American Medical Colleges to meet the national physician shortage.

Locating the new facility in Providence’s Jewelry District will put medical students within walking distance of the School’s major teaching hospitals, health care facilities, and research laboratories, and yet maintain a close connection to the College Hill campus. Such proximities will support the advising and mentoring that are integral to medical education at Brown. Just as critically, the building will enable the School to institute the Academy system, a concept used by a growing number of medical schools nationally. In this system, each student is assigned to an “Academy” of 40 students from all four years and remains with that group throughout medical school. A senior clinical faculty member serves as a mentor and role model, and provides guidance and support. By fostering collegiality, faculty- and peer-mentoring, and a sense of connectedness, the Academy system enhances students’ formal and personal education: it provides the ideal setting for small group learning while serving as a home base and creating a feeling of community.

New science requires new teaching methods. Gone are the days when medical students sat in the same lecture hall for eight hours a day. Today, small group settings characterize much of the curriculum, from medical interviewing and physical exam skills to preclinical courses where students work through scientific and ethical challenges collaboratively. The new facility’s lecture halls and small classrooms will give faculty and students unprecedented flexibility in tailoring space to meet their teaching and learning needs while taking into account technological advances and a developing curriculum.

Anatomy class is still the cornerstone of medical education. The building’s modern, fully outfitted anatomy suite, with ample space for dissection, demonstrations, and review of x-rays and other imaging, will guarantee that this seminal experience in every medical student’s life is as rich and educational as it can be.

Plans for the building also include a clinical simulation center. This area will offer a realistic outpatient care facility that will be used for student interactions with standardized patients (actors simulating patients). There will be the technological capacity to video-record student/patient interactions. In addition, the area will employ mannequins that enable students to learn procedures and techniques without the involvement of a real (and vulnerable) patient.

These areas, in addition to modern study space and library and computing resources, will occupy 63,000 of the building’s 137,000 gross square feet.

While its importance for medical education at Brown is beyond measure, the renovated building will also stand as a ground symbol of Brown’s partnership with the city, the state, and the region.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation is currently relocating Interstate 195 and thus reconnecting the Jewelry District to downtown Providence. The Jewelry District, once the site of such 19th century manufacturing industries as textiles and jewelry, today is poised to become the Knowledge District, a hub of innovation and discovery.

The new medical education building, whose ground floor lobby and cafe will be open to the public, will play a major role in this revitalization. It will foster a vibrant and diversified local economy and act as a stimulus for sustainable, high value-added employment in the region’s burgeoning health, science, and biotech industries.

"Brown’s new medical education building will provide a phsyical identity for Alpert Medical School, helping to sustain and expand its growing status as a national leader. Additionally, it provides the Jewelry District with a regional economic development opportunity." 

Ruth J. Simmons
President, Brown University

"The new facility and surroundings will enhance the Jewelry District. Above, looking south on Richmond Street toward the medical education building. Below, looking east on Ship Street toward the river, with the medical education building on right."