

▼ Kira Holm looks through a microscope at a malaria-causing parasite, while her sister, Taylor Holm, waits for her turn. Fran Sailer (right), assistant professor of microbiology and immunology with the UND School of Medicine, was one of many to set up health-related booths to mark the school's centennial open house Monday.

Just what the doctor ordered



Jackie Lorentz, staff photographer

■ Hundreds help celebrate centennial of actual first day of medical classes at UND

By David Dodds
Herald Staff Writer

A life-size cutout of UND medical school dean Dr. H. David Wilson, in a "c'mon in" pose, stood at one door to greet guests.

A basket full of apples under the sign, "An apple a day keeps our graduates away," sat near the entryway of another door.

Greeters handed out free water bottles to the first 100 guests, and they were all gone in less than 30 minutes.

Organizers of Monday's public open house at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences figured more than 400 people showed up to be part of the event — a centennial celebration of the actual first day of classes for North Dakota's only medical school.

Amanda Scurry, medical school spokeswoman, said the open house attracted people from all walks of life, from alumni back for Homecoming week festivities to current and former staff members of the school.

"I'm pleasantly surprised to see the number of what looks to be UND students who've showed up," Scurry said.

The medical school is in the midst of a yearlong celebration of its centennial that has brought events and festivities across the state it serves.

Years of change

In 100 years, the medical school has been headquartered in at least three different on-campus buildings, finally settling in its current site, the former St. Michael's Hospital on North Columbia Road. Now the medical school has satellite campuses in Fargo, Bismarck and Minot.

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For the first 70 years, it was a two-year medical school, sending its students off to other medical schools around the country to finish their education.

That changed in 1973, when the state Legislature approved turning it into a four-year, degree-granting medical school. At the time, the state was dealing with a shortage of physicians, and the student doctors that the school was sending elsewhere to finish school tended not to return to their home state.

As it stands today, UND's medical school has educated about half of the practicing physicians in the state.

Health and wellness

Monday, the public was treated to birthday cake and information in more than 30 booths on health and wellness.

One station gave free retinal scans to alert people of possible internal eye diseases.

First- and second-year medical students also performed free medical screenings for blood pressure, glucose levels and body mass.

Eric Fenstad, a second-year

student from Fargo, said more than 40 fellow students signed up quickly to help at the dozen screening stations.

He said it's beneficial any time medical students get a chance to practice their skills on real people.

"We don't do any diagnosing, but we do look for patterns that say they may be going down a wrong road, and we make referrals so they can get the help they need."

School gets its day

Also, part of the day were tours of the various research and educational departments at the medical school. The school's clinical laboratory scientists also took visitors through the process of performing diagnoses on body and blood samples.

In the Anatomy Department, masters and doctoral students gave an anatomy lesson, using real human body parts from the school's Deeded Body Program, in which people can donate their bodies to science after they die.

Both the state of North Dakota and the city of Grand Forks designated Monday as UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences Day.

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