Emily Ramharter
2014 WARM Graduate
Undergrad - UW-Madison, BS - double major in biology and molecular biology, minor in environmental studies

Emily, from Stoughton, Wisconsin, joined WARM so she could stay connected with rural Wisconsin and its diverse communities. One of nineteen graduates of the WARM class of 2014, her close-knit cohort and helpful program administrators provided a support network that let her pursue her dream of providing medical care in the same places she loves to hike, camp, and enjoy outdoor adventures.

Emily matched into the family medicine residency program at UW and will be a member of the Belleville Family Medicine clinic, allowing her to continue serving rural Wisconsin.

Why did you choose WARM instead of the general MD program at Madison?

“WARM provided me the unique opportunity to train and work in an area in which I also love to play. Rural medicine also places emphasis on the community aspect of medicine, a cornerstone of these communities," says Emily.

How do you think your training in WARM will make you a better physician?

“My clinical training in Wisconsin’s rural communities has been the highlight of my medical education. Working with rural underserved populations has provided valuable insight into the unique needs of rural communities and the challenges faced by rural healthcare providers. I am entering residency with my eyes wide open and I am ready to tackle these challenges head on.”
Launched in fall 2007, the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM) is a rural medical education program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The program prepares and supports students who intend to practice rural medicine in Wisconsin and help improve the health of rural Wisconsin communities.

Who should apply to WARM?
If you have a strong interest in practicing medicine in rural Wisconsin, you should apply to WARM. The strongest applications will be from those applicants who have spent a significant amount of time and have significant experiences in rural areas, have a strong record of community involvement and have an interest in family medicine. All applicants should be committed to practicing medicine in rural Wisconsin. Applicants must be residents of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota or Wisconsin. Please see med.wisc.edu/WARM for full application instructions.

WARM curriculum
The first two years of WARM are spent in Madison following the pre-clinical curriculum while participating in rural enrichment activities such as the Rural Health Interest Group, a rural elective, and rural preceptorships.

During years three and four, WARM students complete the required clerkships in a “regional and rural learning community” while progressing through a rural-focused curriculum. This learning environment allows students to begin to learn to address the healthcare needs of rural citizens while benefiting from small learning groups.

WARM highlights the school’s statewide campus and partners with Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, Marshfield Clinic in Marshfield, and Aurora Baycare in Green Bay — as well as their respective rural clinics — to host and train students.

What makes WARM unique?
• High faculty-to-student ratios
• Hands-on learning of a variety of clinical skills relevant to rural practice
• Regular core days at WARM sites allows students to connect with peers and focus on clinical topics from a rural perspective
• During years three and four, WARM students will complete a community health project at their WARM site. Students undertake a particular health challenge facing the community and work with a mentor and local experts to offer options to address it.

WARM graduates
Over 60% of WARM graduates stay in Wisconsin for residency, and over 60% pursue primary care. WARM supports the pursuit of all specialties, and WARM graduates have also entered residency in dermatology, emergency medicine, internal medicine/pediatrics, psychiatry, radiology, and surgery (general and orthopedics).

“Our physicians and staff have embraced the opportunity to mentor the WARM students during their clinical training. A strength of the program is the opportunity for students to work side by side physicians and to experience first-hand the rewards of practicing medicine in a small community. The students consistently bring enthusiasm, skill, and dedication to their education. I believe they will provide a strong foundation for the future health of rural communities in Wisconsin.”

Dr. Stephen Holthaus
WARM preceptor
Family Medicine
Marshfield Clinic-Rice Lake Center

Left: A WARM student visits a rural elementary school to encourage children to pursue careers in health.