



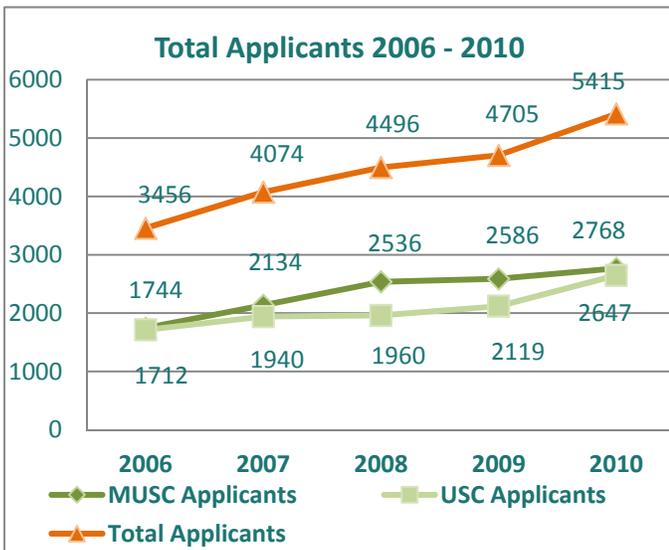
**POLICY BRIEF • March 2011**

*Trends in Student Applications and Enrollments in South Carolina Medical Schools*

Currently, South Carolina is served by two medical schools: USC School of Medicine (USC) in Columbia, and the College of Medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) in Charleston. In addition, the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) whose main campus is located in Blacksburg, Virginia, will open a satellite campus in Spartanburg, South Carolina, in the Fall of 2011. The VCOM program, whose

mission is to: "prepare globally minded, community-focused physicians for the rural and medically underserved areas of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and the Appalachian Region". The VCOM program is partnering with the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System and Wofford College, and will offer a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree. A fourth medical school has recently been proposed by the Greenville Hospital Association, to be located in Greenville, South Carolina.

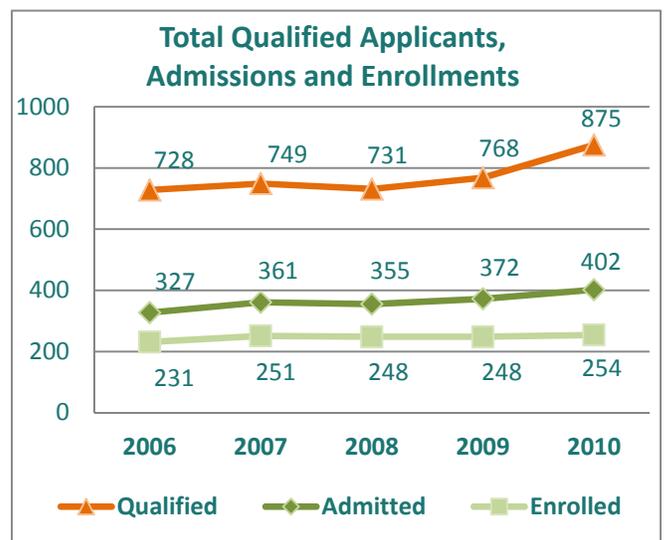
One question raised during discussions of the need for an additional medical school is whether or not the state currently has an adequate number of qualified applicants to fill new medical programs. To address that question,



trends in the number of applications received by the MUSC and USC Colleges of Medicine have been summarized over the past 5 years, along with the number of those applicants deemed qualified by the schools, the number of applicants admitted, and the number actually enrolled. These figures were provided by the admissions offices at MUSC and USC.

Readers should note two important limitations in the application data and this analysis: the definition of a 'qualified applicant' is determined independently by the admissions committee in each school based on program requirements, GPA, and standardized test scores; and the total number of applications deemed 'qualified' by the two existing programs probably contain some duplication. It is likely that some students interested in attending medical school in South Carolina apply to both USC and MUSC.<sup>1</sup> However, the amount of duplication is currently unknown.

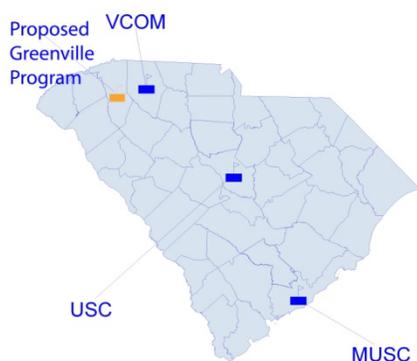
The majority (79%) of all applications received come from people who live outside of South Carolina. Among those deemed 'qualified' by either USC or MUSC, slightly more than 80% are from South Carolina citizens. Of those



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offered admission, 80% are South Carolinians. And of those that actually enroll, about 86% are from South Carolina, based on trends over the past 5 years.

Overall, the total number of applications received by MUSC and USC has increased by 57% over the past 5 years, indicating an increased interest in medical education in our state. However, the number of applications deemed 'qualified' has increased by only 20% overall - from 728 in 2006 to 875 in 2010 - an increase of 147. Between the two medical schools, MUSC and USC have absorbed about half of this growth, increasing the number of students admitted by 23%; from 327 in 2006 to 402 in 2010. However, the total number of students that actually enroll each year has changed very little in the past 5 years (see chart above).



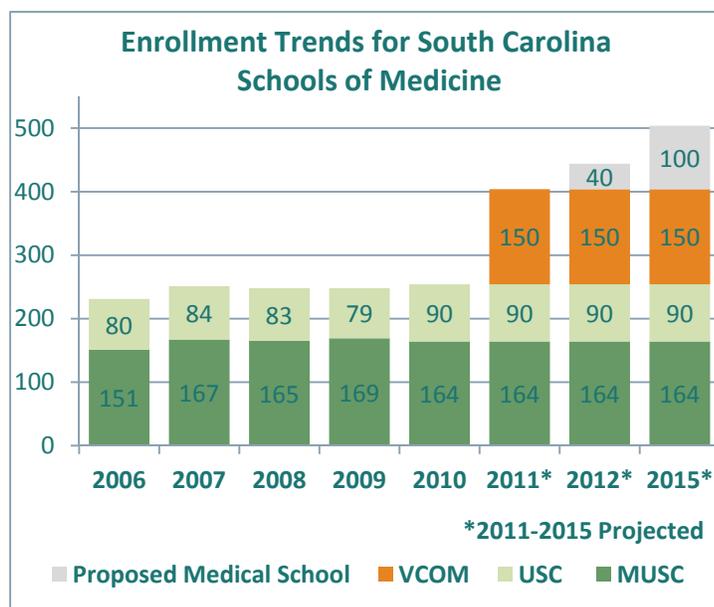
In 2010 a total of 473 'qualified' applications did not receive an admission invitation from a South Carolina medical school. Thus, based on 2010 applicant pools, the potential number of qualified applicants for an additional medical school is estimated to be between 237 and 473 annually, taking potential duplication into account. Of course, additional programs may create new additions to the applicant pool over and above what currently exists.

The map to the left shows the geographic locations of the existing, new and proposed medical schools. The newest program in the state, the VCOM satellite campus, expects to enroll and graduate 150 osteopathic physicians each year. The first freshman class of 150 will be enrolled in the Fall of 2011. The

first graduating class is expected in 2015. The program being proposed for the Greenville area, in association with the Greenville Hospital System, is not yet accredited and thus not yet ready to accept students. According to the Office of Media Relations at the [University of South Carolina School of Medicine](#), "approximately 40 students annually will be able to spend all four years of their medical training at the Greenville Hospital System as early as 2012."

[Another source](#) says that the goal for this new program is to increase enrollment to 100 first year students by 2015.

The chart to the right illustrates that in 2011 the VCOM program will increase annual first year medical school enrollments in South Carolina by approximately 60% over 2010 levels, bringing the state close to 400 new enrollees each year. If the new program being proposed for the Greenville area materializes, then total first year enrollments could increase by another 25% to approximately 500 per year in 2015, if all current and projected seats can be filled with qualified applicants.



Sources: MUSC admissions office, USC admission office, Greenville Online.com, (26Feb2010) "Edward Via College of

Osteopathic Medicine could help fill doctor shortage;" USC Office of Media Relations "USC, GHS boards approve program expansion" (06Aug2010), and Post and Courier "USC eyes med school expansion" (05Aug2010).

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<sup>i</sup> The in-state matriculation rate (the number of students entering any medical school who attend a school within their home state) in South Carolina was the highest in the nation in the 2008-09 academic year according to the Association of American Medical Colleges, 2009 State Physician Workforce Data Book, November 2009.