Why Teaching Hospitals Are Important to All Americans

America has the world’s best doctors and nurses because we have the world’s best teaching hospitals. These institutions train almost every new doctor and nurse in our nation. Teaching hospitals also discover the cures and provide the critical services that save American lives every day. These hospitals provide care to all Americans, insured or uninsured.

Teaching Hospital Train Tomorrow’s Doctors
The work of teaching hospitals is more important than ever, as our nation faces a growing shortage of physicians:

- By 2015, the shortage will reach 62,900 physicians in all specialties; 91,500 doctors by 2020.
- The Medicare population will grow by 36 percent over the next 10 years.
- One-third of physicians will reach age 60 (and likely retire) in the next 10 years.

Teaching Hospitals Provide Cutting Edge Care
AAMC teaching hospital members provide around-the-clock, onsite, and fully staffed standby services for critically ill or injured patients. These hospitals receive more than 40 percent of all transferred patients whose illnesses or injuries require a sophisticated level of technology and expertise not available elsewhere in the community. Even though they represent only 6 percent of all hospitals, teaching hospitals provide:

- 75 percent of all burn care units;
- 62 percent of pediatric ICUs;
- 61 percent of all Level 1 regional trauma centers;
- 50 percent of surgical transplant services;
- 41 percent of Alzheimer centers;
- 40 percent of the nation’s neonatal ICUs; and
- 22 percent of cardiac surgery services, often for the most seriously ill heart patients.

Teaching Hospitals Provide a Health Care Safety Net
The majority of AAMC-member teaching hospitals are located in urban regions, many of which are in inner-city areas with high poverty rates. Teaching hospitals:

- Provide 41 percent of all hospital charity care.
- Are the sites for approximately 25 percent of all Medicaid hospitalizations.

Teaching Hospitals Serve Their Communities
AAMC-member teaching hospitals are more likely than nonteaching hospitals to reach out to the communities they serve by offering various community programs. For example, 89 percent of AAMC-member teaching hospitals offer AIDS services, compared to 16 percent of nonteaching hospitals. Teaching hospitals also support poison control centers, nutrition programs, substance abuse outpatient services, and crisis prevention programs.