November 2016

Dear President-Elect Trump:

The enclosed briefing book represents the commitment of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) entity, to assist your administration in drawing on the experience of our 147 U.S. medical schools, nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, and more than 80 academic societies in addressing the nation's health policy challenges and opportunities. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC serves the leaders of America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their nearly 160,000 faculty members, 83,000 medical students, and 115,000 resident physicians.

Academic medicine is the combination of medical schools, teaching hospitals, and their faculty members, staff, students, and resident physicians. Medical schools and teaching hospitals sustain an environment where basic, clinical, and health services research can flourish alongside clinical care and training. These organizations and individuals share a commitment to providing education and graduate training to future physicians, biomedical scientists, and other health care professionals; conducting biomedical and clinical research; and advancing medical knowledge, therapies, and technologies to prevent disease, alleviate suffering, and improve quality of life.

Academic Medicine Plays a Pivotal Role in U.S. Health Care

In settings of constant inquiry, medical schools and teaching hospitals integrate the full spectrum of clinical care, training, and research to provide cutting edge health care:

- **Medical Educators:** Through continual renewal and innovation at both the national level and at individual institutions, America's system of medical education prepares physicians and scientists to meet the nation's evolving health needs.

- **Medical Science Centers:** Our medical schools, teaching hospitals, and faculty pioneer cures and bring them to patients. Over 50 percent of all external research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is performed by scientists at medical schools and teaching hospitals.

- **Medical Safety Net:** Major teaching hospitals make up only 5 percent of all hospitals, yet they provide 20 percent of all Medicare hospitalizations, 21 percent of all hospital care, 25 percent of all Medicaid in-patient days, and 35 percent of all charity care.

- **Medical Standby Capacity:** Teaching hospitals deliver primary and preventive care we all need every day, but they also provide trauma care, burn units, and intensive care we hope never to need.

- **Community Health and Health Equity:** Academic medical centers partner with local residents through community-based programs to address social determinants of health, such as lack of access to healthful food, safe housing, and transportation.
Academic Medicine Faces Federal Policy Challenges

Our members face extraordinary policy challenges as they seek to fulfill their educational, scientific, and clinical care missions. This binder briefly outlines the current issues, recognizing that new ones will continue to arise. The most pressing are as follows:

- Advances in medical research require sustained, predictable increases in funding for NIH. Maintaining continued growth in NIH funding will enable researchers at medical schools and teaching hospitals to continue driving the innovation that improves health for all.

- Experts project a national doctor shortage of between 61,700 to 94,700 primary and specialty care physicians, in part due to a growing, aging population. Lifting the 1997 caps on Medicare graduate medical education (GME) support is a critical part of the solution.

- Medicare's indirect medical education (IME) payments are critical patient care payments that support Medicare's share of the costs teaching hospitals incur for treating the most complex patients. This funding must be preserved both to sustain an environment where teaching hospitals' training, patient care, and research missions can thrive and to support critical services vital to the health of our communities.

- Teaching hospital and medical school physicians treat a large proportion of our nation's most medically complex and vulnerable patients who frequently face challenges beyond a hospital's control. Medicare quality programs must take into account sociodemographic factors to ensure hospitals and physicians treating these patients are not penalized inappropriately.

The AAMC stands ready to aid you in improving and protecting the health of all Americans. Please contact AAMC Chief Public Policy Officer Karen Fisher, JD, any time at kfisher@aamc.org or 202-828-0412.

Sincerely,

Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President and CEO