Medical discovery and advancement requires effective research across a continuum from basic science to clinical, health services, and health systems research. Accordingly, it is vital to support research, health agencies, and initiatives across the spectrum.

**Issue**

In addition to agencies described elsewhere in this collection of policy priorities, several federal agencies, both within and outside the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), award grants to medical schools and teaching hospitals to advance the continuum of research and discovery. These include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI).

**Background**

**CDC**

As the nation’s lead prevention agency, the CDC is responsible for promoting health and quality of life through efforts to prevent and control disease, injury, and disability. The CDC works with states, local public health agencies, and partners across the nation to monitor health, detect and investigate disease outbreaks, conduct research to enhance prevention, develop and implement sound health policies, foster healthy environments, and provide needed leadership and training in public health. The CDC is an important part of the public health continuum, and the AAMC-member institutions play a significant role in carrying out the CDC’s extramural programs, activities, and research.

Since October 2000, the AAMC has maintained a cooperative agreement with the CDC to enhance collaborations between the academic medical and public health practice communities. Priority areas of interest shared by the CDC and the AAMC at that time were promoting the teaching of prevention and public health in academic medical centers, promoting the training of public health and prevention researchers, increasing the number of underrepresented minority students in medical schools, and mitigating health disparities. The cooperative agreement was renewed in August 2012 for five years to support practical, hands-on experience at the community level for public health, medical, and nursing students.

**HRSA**

HRSA serves as the primary federal agency dedicated to improving access to health care services, especially for the uninsured, the underserved, and medically vulnerable populations. Tasked with strengthening the nation’s health care safety net, HRSA grants augment other federal programs by supporting direct health care access for the uninsured, individuals with HIV/AIDS, pregnant women, mothers, and children; the training of health professionals; and improved systems of care in rural communities. HRSA also has programs that support various research initiatives, such as grants to conduct primary care research through Title VII primary care training programs and the National Research Service Award for Institutional Research Training program. In addition to the Title VII health professions training programs and the National Health Service Corps, HRSA also administers the Children’s Hospitals Graduate Medical Education program, which provides funds to support the training of residents in children’s hospitals.

**NSF**

The NSF is an independent federal agency supporting basic science and engineering across all disciplines; it is the second largest sponsor of research at colleges and universities after the National Institutes of Health. The NSF funds approximately 11,000 research, education, and training projects through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements at more than 2,000 colleges, universities, and other research and education institutions. The NSF also plays an important role in supporting efforts to improve science, math, and engineering education at the K–12 level, as well as at colleges and universities. The AAMC is a member of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), which advocates for robust funding for the NSF science, engineering, and education basic research programs.

**VA Research**

Funding for VA research must be steady and sustainable to meet current commitments while allowing for innovative scientific growth to address critical emerging needs, including conditions prevalent among new veterans as well as the increasing health
needs of aging veterans. Under the president's Precision Medicine Initiative, the AAMC supports the Million Veteran Program—an initiative that seeks to collect the genetic samples and health information from 1 million veterans to drive the future of research and medicine—without reducing funding for other designated research areas. The AAMC collaborates with the Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) coalition and the Independent Budget Veterans Service Organizations to develop funding recommendations for VA research.

PCORI

PCORI is an independent, nonprofit organization that was authorized by Congress in 2010. Since its inception, the institute has made substantial progress in developing a national infrastructure for the conduct of comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER) and other efforts to strengthen decision making by patients and providers. CER and patient-centered outcomes research are a central component of sustainable health care reform because they improve the quality and effectiveness of care. A 21-member Board of Governors appointed by the Government Accountability Office and representing patients; physicians, hospitals, and other providers; private payers; pharmaceutical and device manufacturers; quality improvement or independent health service researchers; and federal agencies oversees PCORI’s work, and a 17-member Methodology Committee defines methodological standards for research.

PCORI is funded through the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund (PCORTF), which receives income from a combination of mandatory appropriations ($150 million in each of the fiscal years [FYs] 2013–2019), transfers from the Medicare and Medicaid trust funds, and a fee assessed on private insurance and self-insured health plans (as of April 2016, $2.17 per covered person). The trust fund is scheduled for reauthorization in 2019. As institutions that both generate and use patient-centered outcomes research, AAMC-member medical schools and teaching hospitals are among the most frequent PCORI grantees. In FY 2016, 76.6 percent of PCORI award funding supported medical schools and teaching hospitals.

AAMC Policy Recommendations

- The interrelated and interdisciplinary nature of research, including basic, public health, clinical, health services, and comparative effectiveness, requires robust and reliable support for complementary research agencies. And to fully maximize the potential of medical research, it is critical to augment support for these agencies with investments in the federal programs and agencies that help ensure that the findings can reach the broadest spectrum of the patient population.

- The AAMC recommends increased funding for VA Medical and Prosthetic Research in FY 2018 for biomedical inflation, critical emerging research needs, and the Million Veteran Program.

- As a member of the Friends of HRSA, the AAMC supports robust funding for HRSA programs and research to improve access to health care services and the nation’s health care safety net.

- The AAMC supports adequate and continued funding for the CDC to improve emergency preparedness and prevention programs, support local and state public health programs, and coordinate the nation’s defense against emerging and known threats.

- The AAMC supports continued funding of PCORI to continue its work in strengthening the decision-making process for patients and providers.

Related Issues

- National Institutes of Health
- Caring for Our Nation’s Veterans

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Web Resources

Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research
www.friendsofva.org

Coalition for National Science Funding
www.cnsfweb.org

Friends of the Health Resources and Services Administration
www.friendsofhrsa.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coalition
www.cdccoalition.org