



AAMC

Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

The Work Ahead for Academic Medicine

Our Guiding Principles

The Association of American Medical Colleges serves and leads the academic medicine community to improve the health of all. www.aamc.org

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Our Guiding Principles

As the institutions that provide high-quality, patient-centered health care, educate tomorrow's physicians and biomedical scientists, and discover tomorrow's cures, academic medicine is central to the future of our nation's health.

America's medical schools and teaching hospitals are committed to improving the health of all—regardless of background, beliefs, race, sexual and gender identity, or geography. These institutions are also committed to the nation and their communities as drivers of high-quality health care, pioneers of cures and treatments for once-fatal diseases, leading employers, providers of safety net and critical emergency services, and partners in public health. We work for a just health care system for all, including rural and urban underserved populations, children, veterans, and seniors, among others.¹

In pursuit of our missions, the AAMC and its members have always been committed to advancing:

- A health care system that provides high-quality, safe, equitable, and cost-effective care for all, including the nation's most vulnerable
- A well-trained, culturally competent, and diverse health and biomedical workforce that leads to improved health for all
- Medical knowledge, therapies, technologies, and delivery science to prevent disease, alleviate suffering, and improve quality of life

Advancing a health care system that provides high-quality, safe, equitable, and cost-effective care for all, including the nation's most vulnerable

Medical schools and teaching hospitals have always been key providers of health care services, particularly for medically complex patients and those who are uninsured and disadvantaged.

Our institutions and the people within them are committed to:

- Providing access to the full spectrum of evidence-based, patient-centered health care for all
- Improving the quality and value of health care
- Providing emergency and disaster services and care for the most complex and vulnerable patients

Access. Today, the number of people without health insurance is at historic lows.² Despite this progress, more than 28 million Americans remain uninsured,³ and the cost of health insurance continues to rise—for some at an unaffordable rate. Because insurance coverage leads to better health,⁴ we will continue to work with policymakers and other stakeholders to ensure meaningful, affordable public and private health coverage for all.

Quality and value. Teaching hospitals and academic physicians are committed to providing high-quality, equitable care that prioritizes patient participation and reduces unnecessary costs. Physicians and other health professionals at our institutions practice evidence-based medicine and are committed to working

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with their patients and families to determine the best course of treatment, given patient preferences. Shared medical decision making must be between a patient and his or her provider and grounded in high-quality, scientifically supported evidence. Quality measures should enhance, not undermine, the ability of teaching hospitals and physicians to provide high-value care to the diverse populations they serve.

Emergency and complex care. Medical schools and teaching hospitals are uniquely qualified to provide care to patients with the most complex conditions. Additionally, our institutions stand on the front lines ready to care for our communities and country during times of crisis, such as natural disasters, mass violence, emerging infectious diseases, and other health events. These critical responsibilities require maintaining facilities, equipment, and personnel often unavailable elsewhere in the region, such as 24/7 emergency services, including trauma centers and burn units. Federal and state governments are critical investment partners to ensure access to specialized services for their communities.

Advancing a well-trained, culturally competent, and diverse health and biomedical workforce that leads to improved health for all

Caring for our nation requires a highly qualified and sufficient health and biomedical workforce driven by a responsive medical education system that emphasizes lifelong learning.

Our institutions and the people within them are committed to:

- Championing diversity and cultural competence in the health professions
- Educating a physician workforce that ensures access to care for all
- Educating physicians and biomedical scientists to continually improve 21st-century care

Diversity and cultural competency. Research demonstrates that diversity in the health professions leads to improvements in access to care for the underserved and learning environments that increase creativity and cultural competency for all students.^{5,6,7} Public and private investment in medical career “pipeline development” is critical to ensuring interested students can prepare for and enter health professions education programs. Equally important are supportive policies that enable medical schools to accept and train diverse matriculating classes, as well as policies such as financial aid that enable qualified students from all backgrounds to become health providers.

Sufficient workforce. Despite delivery system changes, analyses project a significant and real national doctor shortage, a challenge that many communities—such as veterans—already face.⁸ Medical schools have responded to this crisis by increasing the number of medical school graduates and partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs to begin expanding residency training within their walls. We must work together with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure sufficient residency training positions to address existing and projected physician shortages nationwide.

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Continually improving education. The U.S. medical education system is the envy of the world, in part because of our nation's excellence in clinical care delivery and research and a strong commitment to continual improvement across our missions. Academic medicine is also committed to ensuring that future physicians and biomedical scientists are well prepared to drive innovation in tomorrow's health care and research environments, including the ability to work effectively in interprofessional teams, adapt to changing technology, and identify new evidence-based practices that will ensure patients receive cutting-edge care. Medical faculty actively ensure that education and training evolves and responds in line with the changing health care needs of the nation.

Advancing medical knowledge, therapies, technologies, and delivery science to prevent disease, alleviate suffering, and improve quality of life

Academic medicine drives the advancements that improve health. Many medical firsts and treatments that have become standards of high-quality care were pioneered in the nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals, including bone marrow and organ transplants; intensive care for newborns; new and better treatments for diabetes, cancer, and heart disease; and new technologies, such as joint replacements. Strong academic enterprises enable researchers and physicians to discover novel therapies, lifesaving cures, and opportunities to improve quality of life and the health of all.

Our institutions and the people within them are committed to:

- Building capacity for medical discovery and innovation
- Preparing the next generation of biomedical and other researchers
- Conducting promising, broad-based research across the spectrum

Medical discovery. The research conducted at medical schools and teaching hospitals, including Veterans Affairs hospitals, has made the United States a world leader in biomedical discoveries and innovation. These research efforts improve the health of patients everywhere and also spur private sector investment and growth through the development of new industries, jobs, and technologies. These discoveries have been made possible by public-private partnerships and public funding, and future discovery and innovation can only continue with increasing resources.

Next generation. Sustaining discovery requires a robust and multidisciplinary scientific and medical research workforce. Public-private partnerships have enabled supportive mentoring, effective career guidance, and adequate financial support programs for research trainees. Academic institutions remain committed to training, recruiting, and retaining talented and dedicated scientists and ensuring that there is strong support for research careers for new generations of biomedical scientists.

Broad-based research across the spectrum. Medical schools and teaching hospitals conduct all types of research—from disease-driven basic and clinical biomedical research to health services research to patient-centered outcomes research—to drive improvements in health and health care. The rigorous multilayered review process for federally supported research ensures that only scientifically meritorious,

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impactful, and relevant research is funded. A multifaceted, multidisciplinary approach is crucial because the discovery process is facilitated by diverse and complementary efforts to achieve the next major breakthrough.

Guiding Our Actions with Our Principles

America's medical schools and teaching hospitals remain committed to the following guiding principles for our work today and tomorrow:

- Providing access to the full spectrum of evidence-based, patient-centered health care for all
- Providing emergency and disaster services and care for the most complex and vulnerable patients
- Improving the quality and value of health care
- Championing diversity and cultural competence in the health professions
- Educating a physician workforce that ensures access to care for all
- Educating physicians and biomedical scientists to continually improve 21st-century care
- Building capacity for medical discovery and innovation
- Preparing the next generation of biomedical and other researchers
- Conducting promising, broad-based research across the spectrum

Each of these guiding principles creates a health care system that is better for patients, leading us to achieve our mission to improve the health of all. Academic medicine is committed to bringing the greatest value to patients, to our communities, and to our nation in pursuit of a healthier world. On behalf of the nation's medical schools, teaching hospitals, and academic societies, the AAMC will continue to be a powerful voice for compassion, equity, and justice as we work to ensure accessible and high-quality health care to improve the health of all.

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