

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges): Leveraging Expertise in Health Care, Medical Research, Medical Education, and Community Collaborations to Improve the Health of People Everywhere

Executive branch and congressional policy makers tackle myriad issues that affect the health and well-being of all, and the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) stands ready to serve as a trusted resource on issues such as health care coverage, medical education, health equity, and combating the COVID-19 pandemic. The AAMC has expertise internally and within its broad membership to inform the development and implementation of key legislation and policies.

Led by a distinguished physician executive with extensive experience in government, medicine, and higher education, and guided by a leadership team with deep expertise in public policy, health care, science, and education, the AAMC represents the nation's preeminent academic medical centers and is dedicated to transforming health care to improve the health of people everywhere.

To learn more about the AAMC experts and academic medicine, contact Karen Fisher, JD, Chief Public Policy Officer, at kfisher@aamc.org.

AAMC members are all 155 accredited U.S. medical schools; more than 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 179,000 full-time faculty members, 92,000 medical students, 140,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

Major teaching hospitals, in partnership with their affiliated medical school physician faculty, are critical institutions for delivering the highest quality care to all patients and are responsible for an outsized proportion of care delivered in the U.S., contributing approximately 3% of the national GDP and employing 65 million people as major economic engines for their communities.

These anchor institutions have decades of experience in mobilizing resources during times of crisis and often lead regional responses in collaboration with their state and local departments of health, regional emergency management systems, and community partners. This unique proficiency has helped to lead the nation's response to previous public health and national disaster emergencies, such as measles, Ebola, H1N1, and Hurricanes Katrina and Maria, and now is a key asset against COVID-19.

As major centers of cutting-edge medical research, medical schools and major teaching hospitals provide the world's most advanced and expert patient care informed by the latest innovations in fundamental and clinical science. In addition to being the origin of most major medical discoveries, academic medical centers are the education and training grounds for the country's next generation of physicians and other health care professionals, with a commitment to improving diversity of the health care workforce and promoting health equity.

Interwoven throughout these missions is a dedicated commitment to meaningful collaborations with community partners that include their voices and perspectives in addressing persistent problems that impact health. Responding to communities' requests for more access to care, AAMC members have established neighborhood clinics, mobile units, and multidisciplinary clinics in high-need disciplines,

extending their safety net role to rural, urban, and other underserved areas where access to care is otherwise elusive. From community-partnered research to service-learning, there are countless examples of medical centers working to improve health outcomes in partnership with and driven by communities.

The AAMC, a national non-profit association based in Washington, DC provides valuable information for policy makers by convening experts, developing and issuing comprehensive surveys of its members, conducting rigorous data analysis, and offering insights and advice of leaders and staff with experience in public policy and academic medicine. The deep bench of experience both within the AAMC and across its membership is a source of unparalleled data and policy analysis.

AAMC Expertise and Experts

The AAMC leads and serves academic medicine to improve the health of people everywhere. **David J. Skorton, MD**, took the helm as President and Chief Executive Officer in July 2019, a post he assumed after serving as the 13th Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and previously as the president of two major research universities. In his first year at the AAMC, Dr. Skorton has led a [comprehensive strategic planning process](#) that established a new mission and vision for the AAMC and 10 bold action plans to tackle the nation's most intractable challenges in health and health care and make academic medicine more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Skorton, a cardiologist, has shared the AAMC's expertise in patient care, medical research, medical education, and health inequities on multiple fronts. He has contributed to the national pandemic response through frequent interactions with senior government officials, appearances in national media, including serving on the *USA Today* Board of Contributors, and a new podcast, "[Beyond the White Coat](#)." He and the AAMC have been leading voices in sounding the alarm on [testing shortages](#), the need for a [road map to reset the nation's approach to the pandemic](#), and [fixing the health care system's fundamental problems exposed by COVID-19](#). Additionally, as national protests have erupted over police brutality, Dr. Skorton has been a passionate and outspoken voice for [ending systemic racism in academic medicine](#) and the [devastating impact of racism on health and our collective national life](#).

In his role as Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Skorton oversaw 19 museums, 21 libraries, the National Zoo, numerous research centers, and education programs. Prior to that, he served as president of two universities: Cornell University (2006 to 2015) and the University of Iowa (2003 to 2006), where he also served on the faculty for 26 years and specialized in the treatment of adolescents and adults with congenital heart disease. A pioneer of cardiac imaging and computer processing techniques, Dr. Skorton was co-director and co-founder of the University of Iowa Adolescent and Adult Congenital Heart Disease Clinic.

Chief Public Policy Officer Karen Fisher, JD, leads the association's public policy and advocacy efforts across the missions of academic medical centers and in support of the communities they serve. She is widely recognized for her expertise in policy and political analysis of federal legislation and regulation affecting the delivery, financing, quality, and cost effectiveness of medical care. Her experience stems from more than three decades of policy experience with the former federal Prospective Payment Assessment Commission (now the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission), U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, and the AAMC.

The AAMC offers expertise in many areas, including:

Transforming Health Care and Improving Patient Access: The nation's academic medical centers are world-renowned sites of innovation and high-quality, cutting-edge care for all patients, including the most

medically complex and the most financially vulnerable. The majority of the nation’s specialized services – including comprehensive cancer centers, many transplant services, burn units, and advanced trauma care – are housed within these institutions, which also disproportionately serve Medicaid and uninsured patients and partner with VA medical centers. This care is delivered in both outpatient clinic and inpatient hospital settings by faculty physician practices – large multi-specialty group practices whose teaching physicians typically have faculty appointments at medical schools who also train the next generation of residents, medical students, and other health professionals.

The AAMC has worked to support its members in managing health care costs and improving quality under alternative payment models. The AAMC is also a nationally renowned source of expertise on the physician workforce, including publishing annual reports that most recently have projected a physician shortage of between 54,100 and 139,000 physicians by 2033, largely due the growing and aging US population. Under its newly adopted strategic plan, the AAMC is working to identify and advance innovative, effective, and evidence-based strategies that enhance health care access for patients and promote health equity while supporting high-value care.

The team of clinical and policy experts responsible for these efforts is led by **AAMC Chief Health Care Officer Janis Orlowski, MD**, who is a practicing nephrologist and former medical school and teaching hospital executive, including most recently several years as chief medical officer and chief operating officer for the Medstar Washington Hospital Center in Washington, DC. Her team includes experts in health care delivery, health care finance, outcomes measurement, patient safety, quality improvement, and workforce analysis and works closely with CEOs and other senior leaders at the nation’s teaching hospitals and health care systems.

Advancing Groundbreaking Discovery: More than half of the research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) occurs at the nation’s medical schools and teaching hospitals. In addition to NIH, the AAMC and its members work closely with other science and public health agencies. Academic medical centers are at the forefront of the full spectrum of discovery, from foundational basic science to efforts to identify and advance effective preventive interventions, new vaccines, more accurate diagnostics, viable therapeutics, and novel clinical care protocols.

The AAMC and its members have been a leading voice in medical research and other science policy for decades. Among the AAMC’s strategic priorities is a commitment to advance biomedical research in service of the public through a thriving and inclusive research environment and a diverse and supported workforce. **AAMC Chief Scientific Officer Ross McKinney, MD**, and his team of science and policy experts oversee this work. Dr. McKinney has decades of experience as a pediatric infectious disease specialist, research scientist, bioethicist, and university medical research executive with Duke University, which equip him to head our team of science, academic, legal, and policy experts who specialize in the analysis and development of the federal medical research enterprise across multiple departments and agencies.

Educating the Nation’s Physician Workforce: Medical education promotes a commitment to learning across the professional lifespan to ensure physicians are prepared to respond to the country’s changing health needs. At both the national level and at individual institutions, medical educators are implementing innovations across the continuum of education and training to reflect the changing context of patient care delivery, from advancing interprofessional education to promote team-based care to enhancing focus on quality improvement and patient safety. The AAMC facilitates these efforts through its evidence-based approach to medical education, carried out by a team of education scholars and experts under the direction of **Chief Medical Education Officer Alison Whelan, MD**, who leads AAMC initiatives to transform the

current models of education and workforce preparation across the full continuum of medical education. Having served as senior associate dean for education at Washington University School of Medicine, she also directs AAMC efforts that support medical education officers, regional campuses, education researchers, students, and residents.

Increasing the Diversity of the Medical Workforce and Health Equity: A diverse workforce is necessary for improving patient care and health outcomes, especially for the growing U.S. racial and ethnic minority population disproportionately affected by structural racism and poor health outcomes. The AAMC leads efforts to ensure its member medical schools and teaching hospitals produce a diverse health care workforce to meet the health care needs of underserved and under-resourced populations and other vulnerable communities, advance culturally and linguistically responsive care, and eliminate health inequities. **Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer David Acosta, MD**, a board-certified family physician, and his team of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) experts lead the AAMC's DEI efforts (pipeline programs, diverse workforce development, faculty and leadership development, gender equity, culture/climate assessment, and multicultural education) across the medical education community. Dr. Acosta is nationally recognized for his DEI expertise having served as chief diversity officer at two academic medical institutions - the inaugural chief diversity officer at the University of Washington School of Medicine, associate vice chancellor of equity, diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer at University of California (UC) Davis Health, and senior associate dean for equity, diversity and inclusion at UC Davis School of Medicine.

Studying and Advancing Meaningful Change: In addition to expertise across a broad portfolio of missions, as part of its newly adopted strategic plan, the AAMC is launching two new resources to offer invaluable expertise on the most pressing issues in health and health care:

- The **AAMC Research and Action Institute** will further focus the AAMC's leadership role in research and policy analysis by coalescing an interdisciplinary team of AAMC researchers, analysts, national experts, and fellows. Led by **Executive Director Atul Grover, MD, PhD**, the institute will study the most critical issues affecting the mission and institutions of academic medicine and harness those institutions to test, validate, promote, and scale effective change. The institute recently issued a [consensus statement](#), providing national guidance on wearing face coverings for the public to decrease the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Dr. Grover has filled important leadership positions within the association over the past 15 years, which includes work in health care workforce analysis. He is an internal medicine physician, health services researcher, and nationally recognized health policy expert. Dr. Grover has faculty appointments at the George Washington University School of Medicine and the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.
- The **AAMC Center for Health Justice** will focus on the intersection of population health, community health, and health equity. The new center will be a source of national expertise for the academic medicine community and the public and will work on initiatives in clinical care, education, research, and community engagement, that advance the moral, financial, and societal imperative of health justice. The center will be led by **Senior Director of Health Equity Research and Policy, Philip M. Alberti, PhD**, who is a nationally prominent expert in health equity and population health research, theory, and practice, and co-led by **Malika Fair, MD, Senior Director, Health Equity Partnership and Programs**, an emergency physician, educator, and public health leader who develops programs and initiatives to enhance institutional, faculty, and student learning in diversity and inclusion, equity, and population health. They will work with medical schools, teaching hospitals, and partner organizations to promote evidenced-based solutions to achieve health equity in health care and society.