

**Statement by the Association of American Medical Colleges on
FY 2022 Appropriations for Programs in the Department of Health and Human Services
Submitted for the Record to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and Related Agencies – June 23, 2021**

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 155 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian 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.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated how sustained support for the research, education, and patient care missions of medical schools and teaching hospitals, with a strong commitment to community collaborations, is essential to ensure a resilient health care infrastructure prepared to respond to both novel and existing threats. For FY 2022, the AAMC recommends the following for federal priorities essential in assisting medical schools and teaching hospitals to fulfill their missions that benefit patients, communities and the nation: at least \$46.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH); \$500 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); \$1.51 billion for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII health professions and Title VIII nursing workforce development programs, and \$485 million for the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program; and at least \$10 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The AAMC appreciates the Subcommittee's longstanding, bipartisan efforts to strengthen these programs. Additionally, to enable the necessary support for the broad range of critical federal priorities, the AAMC urges Congress to approve a funding allocation for the Labor-HHS subcommittee that enables full investment in the priorities outlined below.

National Institutes of Health. Congress's longstanding bipartisan support for medical research has contributed greatly to improving the health and well-being of all Americans, highlighted by the central role medical research has played in combatting COVID-19. As illustrated over the last year, the foundation of scientific knowledge built through NIH-funded research drives medical innovation that improves health through new and better diagnostics, improved prevention strategies, and more effective treatments. Over half of the life-saving research supported by the NIH takes place at [medical schools and teaching hospitals](#), where scientists, clinicians, fellows, residents, medical students, and trainees work together to improve the lives of Americans through research. This partnership is a unique and highly productive relationship that lays the foundation for improved health and quality of life and strengthens the nation's long-term economy.

The AAMC thanks Congress for the bipartisan support that resulted in the inclusion of \$42.9 billion for medical research conducted and supported by the NIH in the FY 2021 omnibus spending bill. Additionally, the AAMC thanks the Subcommittee for recognizing the importance of retaining the salary cap at Executive Level II of the federal pay scale in FY 2021, and for the emergency resources that have advanced COVID-19 research.

In FY 2022, the AAMC joins nearly 400 partners in supporting [the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research recommendation](#) that Congress provide at least \$46.1 billion in program level funding for the NIH, including funds provided through the 21st Century Cures Act for targeted initiatives. This funding level for the foundational work at the core of NIH's mission would continue the momentum of recent years by enabling meaningful growth of 5% in the NIH's base budget over biomedical inflation to help ensure stability in the nation's research capacity long term. Securing a reliable, robust budget trajectory is key in positioning the agency – and the patients who rely on the research it funds – to capitalize on the full range of research in the biomedical, behavioral, social, and population-based sciences. We must continue to strengthen our nation's research capacity, solidify our global leadership in medical research, ensure a research workforce that reflects the racial and gender diversity of our citizenry, and inspire a passion for science in current and future generations of researchers.

In addition to our strong support for a robust increase in NIH's base funding, we look forward to working with lawmakers and the administration to fulfill the goals of the proposed Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) within NIH as part of the administration's \$52 billion request for the NIH to “drive transformational health research innovation and speed medical breakthroughs by tackling ambitious challenges requiring large-scale, sustained, and cross-sector coordination.” The nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals are hubs of innovation in research and care delivery, and the AAMC looks forward to engaging with lawmakers and the administration on opportunities to advance a bold and productive medical research agenda in harnessing our shared commitment to innovation and scientific discovery.

We also wish to highlight the challenges that the pandemic has imposed on the medical research workforce and the broader research enterprise. We continue to be concerned that, without supplemental resources, the disruptions imposed by COVID-19 will undermine NIH's ability to support previous investments in the existing research workforce and new investments in life-saving research. In his recent testimony before the subcommittee, NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, cited the \$16 billion impact of the coronavirus pandemic on medical research progress in all disease areas, and especially on the research workforce. We urge support for emergency funding for NIH as outlined in the bipartisan Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act (H.R. 869/S.289).

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Complementing the medical research supported by NIH, AHRQ sponsors health services research designed to improve the quality of health care, decrease health care costs, and provide access to essential health care services by translating research into measurable improvements in the health care system. [The AAMC joins the Friends of AHRQ](#) in recommending \$500 million in funding for AHRQ in FY 2022.

Health Professions Funding. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII and Title VIII programs have helped the country combat COVID-19, despite the challenges the pandemic posed for grantees. Many grantees adapted their curricula to educate our health workforce during this public health challenge. They also dealt with the unexpected costs of providing personal protective equipment for in-person clinical training and switching from in-person to virtual learning. The pandemic has underscored the need to increase and continuously reshape our health workforce. The programs have proven successful in recruiting, training, and supporting public health

practitioners, nurses, geriatricians, mental health providers, and other front-line health care workers critical to addressing COVID-19. Additionally, in coordination with HRSA, grantees have used innovative models of care, such as telehealth, to improve patients' access to care during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the pervasive health inequities facing minority communities and gaps in care for our most vulnerable patients, including an aging population that requires more health care services. The HRSA Title VII and Title VIII programs educate current and future providers to serve these ever-growing needs, while preparing providers for the health care demands of tomorrow. A diverse health care workforce improves access to care, patient satisfaction, and health professionals' learning environments. Studies show that HRSA Title VII and Title VIII programs increase the number of underrepresented students enrolled in health professions schools, heighten awareness of factors contributing to health disparities, and attract health professionals more likely to treat underserved patients. [The AAMC joins the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition \(HPNEC\)](#) in recommending \$1.51 million for these critical workforce programs in FY 2022.

In addition to Title VII and Title VIII, HRSA's Bureau of Health Workforce also supports the CHGME program, which provides critical federal graduate medical education support for children's hospitals to train the future primary care and specialty care workforce for our nation's children. We support \$485 million for the CHGME program in FY 2022. We also encourage Congress to provide robust funding to HRSA's Rural Residency Programs, which provides funding to develop new rural residency programs or separately accredited rural training track programs, to expand training opportunities in rural areas.

The AAMC encourages Congress to provide long-term sustained funding for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), through its mandatory and discretionary mechanisms. We were appreciative of the \$800 million in supplemental funding for the NHSC in the American Rescue Plan (H.R. 117-2), and we support an appropriation for the NHSC that would fulfill the needs for current Health Professions Shortage Areas.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The AAMC joins the CDC Coalition in a recommendation of at least \$10 billion for the CDC in FY 2022. In addition to ensuring a strong public health infrastructure and protecting Americans from public health threats and emergencies, CDC programs are crucial to reducing health care costs and improving health. Within the CDC total, the AAMC supports \$102.5 million for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program and \$25 million to support gun safety research.

Additional Programs. The AAMC also supports at least \$474 million for the Hospital Preparedness Program within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), in addition to \$40 million to continue the regional preparedness programs created to address Ebola and other special pathogens, including funding for regional treatment centers, frontline providers, and the National Emerging Pathogen Training and Education Center (NETEC).

Once again, the AAMC appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record and looks forward to working with the subcommittee as it prepares its FY 2022 spending bill.