



AAMC Legislative Priorities for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 51st Annual Legislative Conference – September 28, 2022

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) is a nonprofit association dedicated to improving the health of people everywhere through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members comprise all 156 accredited U.S. medical schools; 14 accredited Canadian medical schools; approximately 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and nearly 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and the millions of individuals across academic medicine, including more than 191,000 full-time faculty members, 95,000 medical students, 149,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences. Following a 2022 merger, the Alliance of Academic Health Centers and the Alliance of Academic Health Centers International broadened the AAMC's U.S. membership and expanded its reach to international academic health centers.

The AAMC is actively implementing a robust, 10-point strategic plan to take systemic action to improve the health of people everywhere. Though all the action plans touch on equity and inclusivity in some way, Action Plan 4 is to [Increase Significantly the Number of Diverse Medical School Applicants and Matriculants](#). Under this strategic plan, AAMC is leveraging data for change; widening the pathway to medicine for Black, African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, and first-generation students; and addressing climate and culture for equity. The AAMC and National Medical Association have jointly sponsored an [Action Collaborative for Black Men in Medicine](#), a network community that focuses on systemic solutions to increase the representation and success of Black men interested in medicine. These initiatives build on longstanding AAMC efforts to develop a more diverse physician workforce to provide equitable, high-quality, compassionate, and culturally responsive care to all patients and communities.

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII – [AAMC supports doubling funding for a broad range of HRSA workforce development and diversity pathway programs to help shape the workforce to meet patient needs](#). The HRSA Title VII diversity programs include:

- Health Career Opportunity Program (HCOP), K-16 diversity pathway programs
- Centers of Excellence (COE), student support and minority health training programs at health professions institutions
- Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS), scholarships for minority and/or disadvantaged health professions students
- Faculty Loan Repayment (FLRP), loan repayment program for minority health professions faculty to serve as mentors

Unfortunately, the HRSA Title VII diversity programs have been flat funded for two decades (\$115 million in 2002, compared to \$94 million for 2022). Despite being chronically underfunded, the HRSA Title VII diversity programs reach over 10,000 students annually; however, only 20 schools have HCOP grants and only 17 have COE grants — down from 80 HCOP programs and 34 COE programs in 2005 before the programs' funding was cut substantially.

Graduate Medical Education (GME) – The [AAMC currently projects a nationwide physician shortage totaling between 37,800 – 124,000 by 2034](#), including shortages of primary care physicians between 17,800 – 48,000 and between 21,000 – 77,100 across non-primary care specialty physicians; if marginalized minority populations, people living in rural communities, and people without health insurance had the same health care use patterns as populations with fewer barriers to access, up to an additional 180,400 physicians would be needed right now. While medical schools continue to increase enrollment, this will not be sufficient to address projected workforce shortages without commensurate increases in GME, also known as medical residency training. The AAMC supports the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021 (H.R. 2256, S. 834) [sponsored by Rep. Terri Sewell \(D-AL\)](#) to add 14,000 Medicare-supported GME positions over seven years. While increasing GME is critical to expanding the workforce and creating capacity to train more residents from diverse backgrounds, intervention is needed earlier in the education continuum to substantially increase workforce diversity.

“Pathway to Practice” – The AAMC supports the proposed [HHS Pathway to Practice program](#) included in the House-passed Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5376, Sections 137401-137404). The Pathway to Practice program would start earlier in the medical education pathway with scholarships for medical and postbaccalaureate students from communities that are disadvantaged and underrepresented in the physician workforce. Importantly, the Pathway to Practice program would prioritize applicants that attended HBCUs or MSIs, as well as those who participated in certain HRSA diversity pathway programs. The program would also exempt residency positions with Pathway participants from the Medicare caps on GME support at teaching hospitals that meet certain health equity/diversity-focused criteria.

Community College Pathway – Community colleges are an important bridge to the health professions for all students. Roughly one third of recent applicants to MD medical schools and almost 3 in 10 medical students had ever attended a community college. Among those medical students with a community college background, roughly one third are from race/ethnic or socioeconomic groups underrepresented in medicine, whereas roughly one quarter of medical students with no community college background are from such groups underrepresented in medicine. The AAMC supports the National Medical Corps Act sponsored by Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) to create a structured pathway program that taps into the diversity of America’s community colleges to support and increase the diversity and the number of physicians.

Health Equity – The AAMC and the new [AAMC Center for Health Justice](#) are working to advance health equity infrastructure (e.g., community grants and improving data collection), maternal health, and other priority issues such patient access, telehealth, non-discrimination, and mental health. The AAMC has endorsed the Social Determinants Accelerator Act (H.R. 2503, S. 4486) to authorize an interagency technical advisory panel on social determinants of health (SDOH) and create planning grants for state, local, and tribal governments to establish accelerator programs that address SDOH. Additionally, the AAMC supports the Health Equity and Accountability Act (H.R. 7585, S. 4486), a comprehensive and strategic legislative roadmap that aims to eliminate racial and ethnic health inequities sponsored by the Congressional Tri-Caucus and led this Congress by CBC Health Braintrust Chair Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL).

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