

September 10, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Linda E. McMahon
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Secretaries Kennedy and McMahon:

The AAMC was pleased to be invited by the Department of Health and Human Services to participate in the recent Roundtable on Improving Nutrition Training in Medical Education and appreciates this opportunity to continue to build on that important discussion.

We write today in response to your letter dated August 27, 2025, inquiring about commitments to enhance nutrition education and training among physicians to reduce chronic disease mortality. We concur that advancing nutrition education within medical training is essential to preparing the next generation of physicians to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care and we are writing to share our commitment to doing so.

The AAMC is a nonprofit association dedicated to improving the health of people everywhere through medical education, clinical care, biomedical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 160 U.S. medical schools accredited by the [Liaison Committee on Medical Education](#); 13 Canadian medical schools accredited by the [Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools](#); nearly 500 academic health systems and teaching hospitals, 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, academic health systems and teaching hospitals, and the millions of individuals across academic medicine, including more than 210,000 full-time faculty members, 99,000 medical students, 162,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences. Through the Alliance of Academic Health Centers International, AAMC membership reaches more than 60 international academic health centers throughout five regional offices across the globe. Learn more at aamc.org.

The AAMC recognizes that nutrition is central to preventing, managing, and treating many of the chronic diseases that continue to drive morbidity, mortality, and health care costs in the United States—including cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and certain cancers. Physicians must be adequately prepared with the competencies to address their patients' nutrition-related health needs, including being equipped for collaborative, team-based approaches that engage nurses, registered dietitians, nutritionists, social workers, and other health professionals.

The AAMC has been engaged in strategic efforts to improve nutrition education for many years. As a result, we have seen significant increases in schools integrating this content within their educational programs. Specifically in 2014, 38% of schools reported having nutrition content required in the curricula beyond that related to the basic sciences (metabolism, macro and micronutrients) and in 2024 that figure was 94%.ⁱ We appreciate that the press statement, recently issued by your Departments, cited the AAMC's data and work in this space demonstrating the strides in our community to date.

Our ongoing work in this area is grounded in competency-based medical education. While some past critiques of nutrition education predate our most recent efforts and have relied on outdated measures—such as counting hours of instruction—medical education has shifted toward embedding nutrition within the skills, behaviors, and professional attitudes expected of all medical graduates. This longitudinal integration is consistent with the educational approach AAMC is recommending to our member medical schools across all high-priority topics, to prioritize meaningful uptake among learners over symbolic gestures (such as counting hours of instruction) that may not lead to significant improvements.

While it is important to note that we strongly support the ability of each medical school to retain the flexibility to design local curricula aligned with its mission and accreditation standards, we work regularly to equip educators with national frameworks, shared resources, and evidence-based guidance to guide their work, including through national convenings and professional development opportunities, competency-based frameworks and curricular guidance, and dissemination of evidence-based educational resources. With respect to nutrition specifically, some recent efforts that AAMC led, co-led, or participated in include:

- **National convening of medical education leaders:** The 2023 National Summit on Nutrition Education—co-hosted with the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM)—brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from across the medical education continuum, including residents, undergraduate medical education (UME) and graduate medical education (GME) educators, specialty societies, certifying boards, nutrition experts, and registered dietitians. The summit underscored three key insights: (1) nutrition knowledge is relevant to every specialty and a vital component of physician training; (2) nutrition education is most effective when integrated into existing curricula rather than added as a separate requirement in an already crowded system; and (3) physician learners must gain a clear understanding of the roles of all health care team members, particularly registered dietitians (RDs/RDNs), and how to engage community agencies and resources in patient care.
- **Competency frameworks:** The AAMC has led efforts to define and integrate nutrition-related competencies into education frameworks. Following the 2023 Summit, new nutrition competencies were developed and embedded into the annual AAMC SCOPE Curriculum Survey, which is the gold standard curriculum inventory across all M.D. and D.O. granting medical schools in the U.S. The 2024 Foundational Competencies for

UME, developed jointly by AAMC, AACOM, and ACGME, along with proposed nutrition competencies published in *JAMA*, provide actionable pathways for consistent integration across institutions.ⁱⁱ By embedding nutrition into competency frameworks, the AAMC supports individualized learning and prepares learners to deliver high-quality, team-based patient care.

- **Dissemination of resources:** Disseminating evidence-based resources is a strategic approach to strengthening nutrition education. *MedEdPORTAL*, the AAMC's peer-reviewed, open-access journal, curates high-quality curricula and teaching tools that faculty can readily adopt and adapt across undergraduate and graduate medical education (as well as other health professions education programs). These resources enable schools and residency programs to integrate nutrition into their teaching without relying on outdated and symbolic metrics, such as tracking instructional hours. In addition, the AAMC has contributed to scholarship on lifestyle medicine and nutrition education, including a 2024 *American College of Lifestyle Medicine* keynote on curricular innovation. By curating, developing, and sharing such resources, the AAMC ensures that medical educators have access to cutting-edge materials that support the preparation of future physicians.

While we have made tremendous progress, we also recognize that much work remains to enhance nutrition and chronic disease within medical education. We share your expectation that the medical education community, along with other health professions, has a role to play in promoting greater awareness and advancing education in nutrition. We are committed to supporting our members as they continue to further integrate targeted and longitudinal training opportunities in this area throughout the medical education continuum. The following actions demonstrate our ongoing commitment to equipping future physicians with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to address all patients' nutrition-related health needs effectively. Specific new commitments include:

1. The AAMC will issue a **position statement and call to action** in fall 2025 affirming the responsibility of academic medicine to address nutrition in the context of chronic disease. Through this call to action, we will urge all member medical school Deans to appraise current practices, strengthen, and expand nutrition education within their curricula. To support this work, the AAMC will also share its recent [Data Snapshot on Nutrition in Medical Education](#), which includes concrete curricular recommendations and strategies for integration. Historically, such publications from the AAMC have had a galvanizing effect on the medical education community, and we expect this communication will serve as both a call to action and a practical resource to guide schools in enhancing nutrition training for future physicians.
2. **The AAMC will integrate nutrition education at meetings beginning in fall 2025** by intentionally weaving the topic into sessions across our annual and regional gatherings which reach thousands of educators across academic medicine. These sessions will serve to raise the visibility of nutrition as a core component of medical education and practice,

encourage new research and scholarship in the field, and provide faculty with professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching. By showcasing innovative curricula, sharing emerging evidence, and facilitating cross-disciplinary dialogue, we will continue to build momentum within the academic medicine community. This commitment ensures that nutrition is not only recognized as a vital contributor to health outcomes but also positioned as a strategic educational priority for medical schools and teaching hospitals and health systems nationwide.

3. We will host a first-of-its kind event for medical educators, “**Convening on Best Practices in Medical Nutrition Education**,” which will take place at the AAMC headquarters April 2026. This collaborative event will be offered by the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative, the National Board of Medical Examiners, and others, and will identify and summarize effective strategies for competency-based education in nutrition. Additionally, we will co-sponsor the **Teaching Kitchen Collaborative Annual Conference** fall 2025 and join the **Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine** for a 2025 Leadership Summit.

Our experience is that our community is eager to continue its progress in this area, and the commitments we have outlined above reflect strategic opportunities to advance that interest. It is important to note, the AAMC strongly believes that the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation, which are the recognized accreditation authorities, are the appropriate bodies to set standards with respect to the medical education curriculum. The medical accreditation process is a critical mechanism designed to promote the highest quality medical education and patient safety. To protect learners and patients most effectively, it must be experts in medicine and education who, through their thorough, extensive, and ongoing review of the evidence, determine the content and structure of medical education to ensure that medical education and subsequent practice is guided by evidence rather than political priorities. The LCME requirements are carefully designed and regularly updated to ensure all programs prepare graduates to possess the general professional competencies required for proficient medical care, while recognizing “the existence and appropriateness of diverse institutional missions and educational objectives” in carrying those requirements out.

We strongly believe that the most effective approach to promoting change in medical education is working with the community to equip medical educators with the necessary tools and resources to address pervasive public health challenges as they emerge. Such efforts should rely on medical and educational expertise and not one-size-fits-all or government-mandated approaches. The AAMC has a long history of facilitating such work and stands ready to work with you toward this goal as it relates to continuing to integrate evidence-based content on nutrition into the curriculum and ensuring patient safety remains at the forefront of any effort.

We must also recognize that interventions beyond the classroom directly shape the clinical learning environment. Supporting interprofessional, team-based care models—where physicians, nurses, registered dietitian nutritionists, social workers, and other professionals collaborate

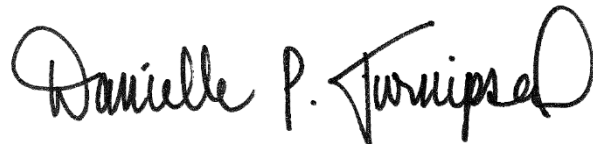
seamlessly—by providing appropriate incentives for nutrition and lifestyle-related clinical interventions all contribute to better patient outcomes. When care teams are empowered and supported through these systemic changes, they model effective, practice for learners—helping to ensure the next generation of physicians and health professionals deliver unbiased, high-quality care that reduces suffering for patients and families.

Thank you again for the opportunity to continue to work with you toward our mutual goal of addressing this shared health priority.

Sincerely,



David J. Skorton, MD
President and CEO



Danielle Turnipseed, JD, MHSA, MPP
Chief Public Policy Officer

ⁱ Howley LD, Bannuru A. Nutrition in Medical Education Curricula: A Recipe for Increased Competency Based Teaching and Learning. AAMC Data Snapshot. AAMC; 2025.

ⁱⁱ Eisenberg DM, Cole A, Maile EJ, et al. Proposed Nutrition Competencies for Medical Students and Physician Trainees: A Consensus Statement. JAMA Netw Open. 2024;7(9):e2435425. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.35425