



Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures®

Academic Medicine: Where Patients Turn for Hope



Association of
American Medical Colleges

What Is Academic Medicine?

Medical education... research...patient care. These three missions are the core of academic medicine, a unique area of health care involving the nation's medical schools, teaching hospitals, and the faculty physicians who work at these institutions. These are the places where the next generation of health care professionals is trained, where medical breakthroughs break through, and where patients can receive the world's most advanced care.

Only in academic medicine does the best medical education, research, and care come together for the benefit of patients.

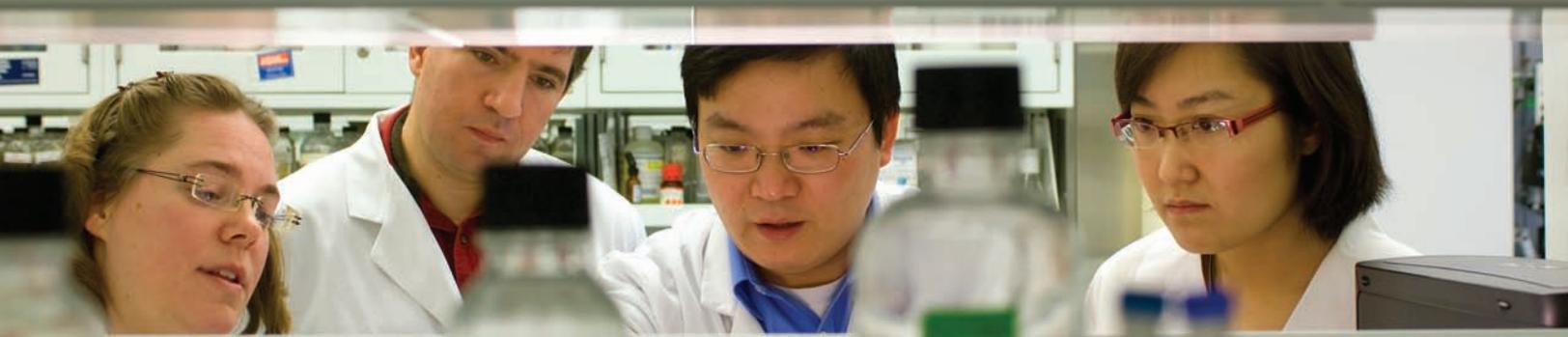
Academic medical centers (AMCs) are where patients, their families, and other health care providers turn to find hope. With the most highly trained physicians and scientists, and the best facilities in the world, these institutions have served as hubs of innovation that have transformed the practice of medicine and dramatically improved our nation's health over the past century. Many staples of today's high-quality, clinical care were first pioneered in academic medical centers, including intensive care units for newborns; new and better treatments for diabetes, cancer, and heart disease; new technologies, such as joint replacements, that improve quality of life; and organ and bone marrow transplantation.

How Is It Different?

Only in academic medicine does the best medical education, research, and care come together for the benefit of patients. It is the resulting synergy—the added value that comes when these three missions are united—that makes academic medicine unique.

In an AMC:

- The focus is on learning, questioning, advancing the practice of medicine, and discovering new scientific knowledge for the benefit of patients.
- Patients are cared for by physicians who also teach—both new doctors as well as experienced, practicing physicians who are continuing their medical education.
- The medical researchers who discover tomorrow's cures and new treatments work alongside physicians to bring these advances to the patient's bedside as quickly and safely as possible.



The Foundation of Health Care



Every year, more than 16,000 new doctors graduate from the nation's medical schools and continue their residency training at U.S. teaching hospitals and in other clinical settings. AMCs also educate more than half of the nation's life science Ph.D.'s, and provide training for more than 100,000 physicians and other health professionals at any given time, including nurses, physician assistants, and physical therapists. Increasingly, physicians and other health professionals at AMCs train and provide care in coordinated, interdisciplinary teams.

Vital Services and Exceptional Patient Care

Often located in urban areas, academic medical centers provide crucial services for their regions, as well as the entire country. Many of the physicians and other health care professionals they train go to smaller communities to practice medicine. The medical research and state-of-art medical procedures that AMCs pioneer help everyone as they transform and improve care.

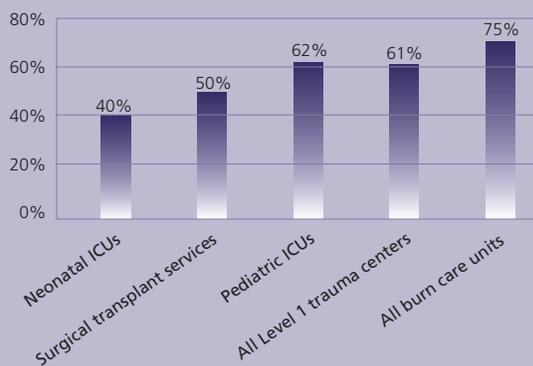
AMCs are perhaps best known for providing the world's most advanced medical care to patients who are diagnosed with serious or rare illnesses, as well as to those who can't determine the nature of their conditions. But they also play an important role in primary care and prevention by providing basic care, as well as specialty care, to patients who have multiple, complex conditions.



AMCs also are frequently the only source of critical medical services in a community, such as trauma and burn care units, that must operate around the clock in case patients need them. And they often are the only places that provide such community services as nutrition counseling, geriatric services, AIDS clinics, substance abuse programs, and crisis prevention centers.

In addition, academic medical center physicians provide care for many of our nation's veterans. Nearly half of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers are affiliated with major U.S. teaching hospitals, making the VA also the largest source of residency training and an important partner in advancing medical research. Moreover, the VA system, with its electronic medical record, operates a health care delivery system with average customer satisfaction levels exceeding that of private institutions.¹

AMCs Provide a Disproportionate Share of Vital Patient Services



Although they represent only 6 percent of all hospitals, academic medical centers provide 20 percent of all hospital care and operate a disproportionate share of many critical patient services.

¹2006 American Customer Satisfaction Index. University of Michigan Stephen M. Ross School of Business, Ann Arbor.

Pioneers of Medical Discovery



Innovation thrives at academic medical centers because of the strong research-orientation of their faculty. More than 50 percent of all grants that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awards to external scientists go to physicians and researchers at the nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals. The long partnership between academic medicine and the NIH has helped pioneer many of medicine's most remarkable advances, including life-saving vaccines; new and better treatments for cancer, diabetes, and heart disease; and advanced technology to improve quality of life, from artificial joints and hips, to minimally invasive techniques.

Innovations from Academic Medicine

Among the many advances pioneered at America's medical schools and teaching hospitals are the:

- First polio vaccine
- First successful pancreas transplant
- First successful bone marrow transplant
- First intensive care unit for newborns
- First human gene therapy for cystic fibrosis
- First adult human heart transplant in the U.S.
- First successful liver transplant
- First successful pediatric heart transplant
- First successful surgery on a fetus in utero

An Essential Part of the Safety Net

Academic medical centers also care for a disproportionate share of medically underserved patients. These patients include those who lack health insurance or are covered by Medicaid, or, though insured, are residents of low-income areas. Although they constitute only 6 percent of all hospitals, AMCs provide 22 percent of services to Medicare beneficiaries, 28 percent of all Medicaid care, and 41 percent of all hospital-based charity care. Federal support of these programs is vital to AMC's care for the uninsured, the poor, and the medically underserved.

A Vital Economic Engine

Medical schools and teaching hospitals play an important role in the economy at the local, state and national levels. According to a recent study,² the combined economic impact of AAMC-member medical schools and teaching hospitals was over

\$512 billion during 2008. Additionally, more than 3.3 million full-time jobs—one out of every 43 wage earners in the United States—are attributable, directly or indirectly, to a medical school or teaching hospital. These institutions also generate significant state tax revenues (more than \$22 billion in 2008) and direct spending in local communities by out-of-state patients, their friends and families, and other visitors.

The Future of Health Care

With their culture of innovation, their commitment to new knowledge and discovery, their state-of-the-art technology, and their strong investment in health information technology, academic medical centers are leading change in our nation's health care system. Innovative new models of care, such as the medical home, that help patients better navigate a complex system, are being pioneered at the nation's AMCs, along with new ways to care for patients with chronic illnesses. New, more effective, targeted treatments are being tested in AMCs today that will transform how we care for patients tomorrow. And the next generation of physicians and other health care professionals is being trained to work in teams, to listen more effectively to patients, and to provide the high-quality, cost-effective, compassionate care that everyone deserves.

Although our nation's health care system will undergo substantial change in the years ahead, one constant will remain—the commitment of academic medical centers to set the standard for the world's best medical care.

²Tripp Umbach Health Care Consulting. *The Economic Impact of AAMC-Member Medical Schools and Teaching Hospitals*, 2009. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Medical Colleges, 2009.

Hope happens every day at America's medical schools and teaching hospitals. Every time a life-saving procedure is performed for the first time. Every time a patient who thought he would never walk again does. Every time a health care team discovers a treatment that will save mothers, best friends, sons, and grandfathers. Every time a person who can't afford medical care receives the best care possible. Every time a talented doctor teaches students and residents everything she knows. Hope happens at **medical schools and teaching hospitals.**

The Association of American Medical Colleges is a not-for-profit association representing all 131 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 68 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and nearly 90 academic and scientific societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC represents 125,000 faculty members, 75,000 medical students, and 106,000 resident physicians. Additional information about the AAMC and U.S. medical schools and teaching hospitals is available at www.aamc.org/newsroom.



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