



Joseph E. Kerschner, MD

The Value to Academic Medicine of the Association of American Medical Colleges

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Academic Medicine in the United States has an enormous impact on the health and well-being of US citizens through directly caring for patients, developing the knowledge that changes lives through new discoveries and research, preparing the next generation of physicians and scientists, and engaging with communities.

In Wisconsin, we are fortunate to have two academic health systems linked to the two medical schools in the state: the School of Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) and the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. Together, these institutions have trained the majority of physicians who practice in Wisconsin! These Wisconsin-based medical schools cumulatively brought in approximately \$297.4 million in federal funding in 2017-2018^{1,2} for biomedical research to bring new discoveries to the state's patients—providing hope for those with the most complex medical conditions and creating substantial positive economic impact for Wisconsin.

In addition to serving as dean of the Medical College of Wisconsin School of Medicine, I am fortunate to have another role nationally, as the incoming chair of the Board of Directors for the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) as of mid-November 2019. The AAMC serves and leads the academic medicine com-

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Doctor Kerschner is dean, School of Medicine, and provost and executive vice president, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wis.

munity to improve the health of all and focuses on transforming health care in four primary mission areas: medical education; patient care; medical research; and diversity, inclusion, and equity in health care. The AAMC and its member medical schools, teaching hospitals, and academic societies are committed to being part of the solution to improve the nation's health care system, and to leading the change that improves health.

The AAMC's imperative to improve the health for all is what most attracted me to service in this organization. It also is a mission that is significant to all physicians in the United States and Wisconsin—whether currently part of academic medicine or simply associated with it through their years as a medical student and trainee in graduate medical education. As noted on the AAMC website: "The AAMC collaborates with its members and their multisector community partners to make progress towards health equity, address public health crises, and ensure that all people can get the care they need from a diverse, inclusive, and culturally responsive physician workforce. Through this collaboration, the AAMC leads and serves the academic medicine community to improve the health of all."³

The AAMC recently named David Skorton, MD, as its new president and chief executive officer, following a distinguished career in government, higher education, and medicine. In my upcoming role as chair of the AAMC board, I will work with Dr Skorton and the staff and board of the AAMC to develop a strategic plan for the organization to guide its areas of emphasis.

This is an important time for medicine in general—and for academic medicine in particular—as we work collectively to improve the health of our nation and to tackle the many changes that are moving forward in our profession.

Although strategic planning for the AAMC under its new leadership is in its earliest phases, this organization has been at the forefront of working with medical schools on physician education, advocating for the importance of biomedical research for our society, and supporting teaching hospitals and academic health systems in their educational and clinical missions to care for patients with the most complex health problems.

I am hopeful for the future of the AAMC's strategic plan and its outcomes—and feel extremely fortunate to participate in its creation. I would be most happy to hear from readers of the *WMJ* should you have particular thoughts related to this important process. I look forward to further sharing with anyone who is interested in the process and the eventual outcome of this work. Please feel free to reach out to me at jkerschner@mcw.edu.

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WMJ

WMJ (ISSN 1098-1861) is published through a collaboration between The Medical College of Wisconsin and The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. The mission of *WMJ* is to provide an opportunity to publish original research, case reports, review articles, and essays about current medical and public health issues.

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