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Testimony of:

Jo Wiederhorn, President & CEO

Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY)

At a Joint Budget Hearing of  
The New York State Assembly Committee on Health  
&  
The New York State Senate Committee on Health

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Legislative Office Building

Albany, New York

Good afternoon Chairwomen Young and Weinstein, Chairmen Hannon and Gottfried and other distinguished members of the State Legislature. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Executive budget for fiscal year 2018-2019.

My name is Jo Wiederhorn, President & CEO of the Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY), the consortium of the sixteen public and private medical schools in New York State. AMSNY works in partnership with its members to promote high quality and cost-efficient health care by ensuring that New York State's medical schools provide outstanding medical education, patient care and biomedical research.

In an article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Stephen Schroeder and colleagues referred to academic medicine as a public trust, "...because it is entrusted by society with the responsibility to undertake several important social missions toward improving the health of the public, including education, patient care and research." New York State's medical schools take this trust very seriously by: 1) educating the future physician workforce; 2) promoting biomedical research and strengthening local economies; and 3) improving the physical and economic health of the communities we serve.

We are grateful for the programs that were included in the Executive budget, including continued funding for New York State Stem Cell Science (NYSTEM) and the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program and for the re-appropriation of funds within the Life Sciences Initiative to recruit scientific talent to academic medical centers. Growing the State's research infrastructure is an important part of improving the state's economy. However, we are very concerned about the Executive's proposed changes to the health budget, specifically as it relates to the proposals that lump funding together for multiple programs; eliminates the certainty of the level of funding; and leaves unanswered which programs will be funded. We are particularly concerned about the workforce pool, in which we believe AMSNY's Diversity in Medicine programs fit.

### **Health Care Workforce**

AMSNY strongly believes in the importance of a multifaceted strategy to meet the growing demand for primary care and specialty physicians, while simultaneously tackling the current need to decrease access issues in underserved areas. AMSNY's Diversity in Medicine programs, in large part funded through the NYS Department of Health, were developed with these two visions in mind.

The provision of healthcare services is in a state of flux. What we know is that the number of people who will need healthcare services will not decline; in fact, with the aging of the baby boomers, demand for services will probably increase. To meet this demand, New York State's medical schools increased enrollment 19% between 2006 and 2016. We now educate more than 11,000 students per year—15% of the total number of medical students trained in the United States. The increase was accomplished by the expansion of class sizes at existing schools and the opening of

two new schools: Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, with a campus in Harlem and another in Middletown, NY and Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine on Long Island.

**However, the changing population demographics demand more than increasing class sizes or opening new schools; it also demands training a more diverse workforce.**

#### **AMSNY's Diversity in Medicine Program**

While underrepresented<sup>1</sup> in medicine populations (URIM) make up 32.9% of the New York State population, they account for approximately 15% of the State's medical students and approximately 9.5% of New York State physicians.

Increasing racial and ethnic diversity among health professionals is important because evidence indicates that diversity is associated with improved access to care for racial and ethnic minority patients, greater patient choice and satisfaction, and better educational experiences for health professions students, among many other benefits. As such, increasing the number of URiMs practicing in the state is vital to the health of New Yorkers.

Since 1985, AMSNY has supported an array of pipeline programs across the state with the intent of expanding the pool of students choosing careers in health and medicine. The goal of these programs is to provide academic enrichment and support to students from educationally and/or economically underserved backgrounds. These programs provide an opportunity that a majority of participants would not have had due to cultural and financial barriers.

#### **Diversity in Medicine Program Threatened**

For many years the Senate and Assembly have been very supportive of these programs—and I am truly grateful for that. This year our students are in dire need of your help. The 2018-2019 Executive Budget aggregates a number of workforce programs—including the *Diversity in Medicine Program*—into a single pool and proposes a 20% reduction. If the program remains in the workforce pool and is forced to take another sizeable reduction, it will simply be devastating to the program. During FY 2017-2018 The Diversity in Medicine program was cut by 22.5%—more than any other program in the pool. Thus, over just two years the program will have been cut by \$610,000—an overwhelming blow to a very successful program. **Attached to this testimony are figures that demonstrate the success of our programs.**

**Without a clear allocation in the budget, our programs are at risk.**

#### **Core Diversity Programs**

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<sup>1</sup> "Underrepresented in medicine means those racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population." AAMC's Executive Council, June 2003

AMSNY oversees six core programs as part of its *Diversity in Medicine* grant that ultimately leads students into medical school, including a post baccalaureate program at the Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, University at Buffalo; and three Master's degree post baccalaureate programs at SUNY Upstate Medical University, Stony Brook School of Medicine and New York Medical College. These programs are unique: Students must apply to a New York State medical school and be interviewed by the schools' admissions' committees. If the admissions committees believe the student would be a good addition to the school, they will recommend him/her to one of the four post-bac programs. If, upon completion of the post baccalaureate program, the student meets the program and the referring school's requirements, he/she will automatically be accepted into the referring medical school. As you will see in the attachment, 93% of students that participate in AMSNY's UB post baccalaureate program enter medical school, and 85% graduate. In our Master's degree post baccalaureate programs, 94% of the students enter medical school.

The other core programs are offered along the educational continuum: support of an academic learning center at CUNY College of Medicine (CUNY)-- a six-year BS/MD program that students enter directly from high school; and a program at the City College of New York that links junior and senior baccalaureate students with NIH-funded researchers to prepare them for careers in medical school or the basic sciences. The Diversity in Medicine Program had also supported a high school program at Staten Island/Northwell University Hospital. Unfortunately, due to the extensive reductions we endured in the fiscal year 2018 budget, we were forced to cut funding for this program.

We are concerned with the new allocation process in the Executive's budge. By placing the programs into a pool, with the funding allocation to be determined at a later date, the programs will be unable to enroll students. All of our programs begin July 1. The recruitment process begins when the schools are determining which students will be accepted (late winter, early spring), which will be placed on a waitlist and which will be referred to a post-bac program. Without a designated allocation in funding, it will be impossible for these programs to operate—they will not know how many students they can accept, nor will the students know how much funding will be made available to them.

**We urge the Legislature to reinstate the Diversity in Medicine Program's line item in the budget and to restore it to its SFY 2017-2018 level: \$1.244 million—so these very successful programs can continue.**

*DOH Scholarship in Medicine Program*

Paying for medical school is a daunting challenge. A majority of medical school graduates complete their education with the assistance of student loan financing. In the graduating class of 2015, 81% of medical students reported finishing school with student loan debt. The median level

of principal debt is currently \$191,000; accounting for accrued interest, the median student debt level upon graduation is more than \$220,000.

In SFY2017-2018, AMSNY received a \$500,000 investment from the State to launch the Diversity in Medicine scholarship program to help address the gap in physician diversity. The scholarship—indexed to the average cost of SUNY medical school tuition— helps students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine by eliminating the financial barrier to medical school enrollment.

AMSNY awarded scholarships to 10 students who have completed one of the Diversity in Medicine post baccalaureate programs. In return, the scholarship awardees commit to working for at least two years in an underserved area in New York. In future years, the commitment will extend to a maximum of four years of service for four years of funding.

AMSNY proposes to continue the Diversity in Medicine Scholarship Program and expand it to include another cohort of medical students. These students would have completed an AMSNY post-bac or Master's program and will commit to practicing in an underserved area of New York State after completing their medical training. Since the Scholarship Program launched this year, 10 students have been awarded scholarships and this funding would allow an additional 10 students to receive scholarships.

**We urge the legislature to provide funding to maintain our current scholarship students for one year and add an additional year's funding to start a new cohort of students: \$500,000 for every 10 students= \$1 million.**

### **Other DOH Programs**

#### **New York State Stem Cell Program (NYSTEM)**

In 2007, New York State committed \$600 million to stem cell research, among the largest government-financed stem cell programs in the country (it is now second only to California's Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM)). New York State's objective was to develop a stem cell research community that could investigate the potential of stem cell technology to alleviate disease and improve human health. Of nearly equal importance was the goal of economic development – the investment in research and facilities that would create jobs and fuel the economy. NYSTEM has proven itself a highly effective, successful program, supporting innovative basic and translational stem cell research. In addition, funding from NYSTEM has been used to create and expand stem cell research infrastructure spanning the entire state and has enabled institutions to recruit and develop a world-class scientific workforce.

Since its inception, the Empire State Stem Cell Board has released 22 Requests for Applications (RFAs), awarded more than \$372 million and supported more than 750 full-time jobs through the NYSTEM program. To date, more than seven biotechnology startup companies have launched and over 49 patent applications filed.

Why should we continue to invest in NYSTEM?

There is an acute need to maintain predictable funding for the NYSTEM program. In addition to the aforementioned successes, treatments and potential cures are yet to be fully realized from New York State's significant investment in stem cell science. Continued funding this year will:

- Prevent the delay of groundbreaking research and the potential for next generation treatments and cures.
- Prevent New York State from losing its world-class scientific talent.
- Reaffirm New York State's commitment to stem cell science and, more broadly, to scientific research and innovation

**We urge the legislature to provide full funding for the New York State Stem Cell Program (NYSTEM) at \$44.8 million in FY 2018-2019. In addition, we urge the State to maintain its commitment to fully funding the remainder of the \$600 million program.**

Empire Clinical Research Investigator Program

In 2000, New York State established the Empire Clinical Research Investigator Program (ECRIP) in order to support physicians in training fellowships, as well as infrastructure costs necessary for clinical research. ECRIP awards have helped better position New York's medical schools and teaching hospitals as international leaders in biomedicine—attracting the brightest medical students and physician trainees and improving the state's competitive position for federal research dollars. Since its inception in 2000, over 910 project abstracts have been submitted for funding with 586 awarded to 66 teaching hospitals, totaling more than \$100 million in funding.

**AMSNY urges the legislature to fund ECRIP for at least \$7 million to continue the success of this program.**

Closing

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your continued support of medical education. I welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jo Wiederhorn

The Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY) is the consortium of the sixteen public and private medical schools in the state. The organization's mission is to promote high quality and cost-efficient health care by ensuring that the New York State medical schools can provide outstanding medical education, care and research.

AMSNY Member Institutions

- Albany Medical College
- Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
- CUNY School of Medicine
- Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai Medical Center
- Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, University at Buffalo, SUNY
- New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine
- New York Medical College
- New York University School of Medicine
- SUNY Downstate Medical Center
- SUNY Upstate Medical University
- Stony Brook University School of Medicine
- Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine
- University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry
- Weill Cornell Medicine
- Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell



# DIVERSITY IN MEDICINE

AMSNY supports programs across the educational continuum to expand the pool of students choosing careers in medicine and other health professions. The programs are supported through a grant from the State Department of Health, with additional financial assistance from the medical schools.

## POST-BACCALAUREATE & MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

The programs provide coursework, financial assistance, mentoring and comprehensive support services to students recommended by participating medical schools. Students are referred through wholistic admissions processes and offered conditional acceptance to medical school.



# 94%

of students who completed the Master's Degree programs have entered medical school

(DATA FROM 2008-2017)

### MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

MS in Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences  
New York Medical College

MS in Physiology and Biophysics  
Stony Brook University School of Medicine

MS in Medical Technology  
SUNY Upstate Medical University

*"The preparation and training provided by AMSNY's Medical Scholars Master's Program enabled me to feel confident and handle the rigorous demands of medical school."*

**DR. SAMANTHA JONES**

Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, SUNY Upstate Medical University, alumna, SUNY Upstate Medical Scholars Program

### POST-BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

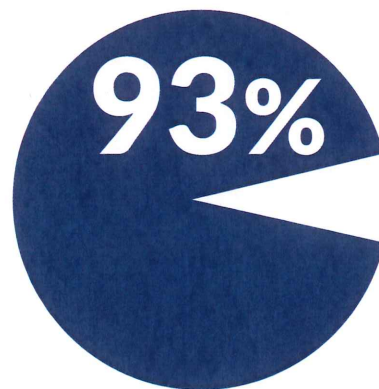
Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences,  
University at Buffalo, SUNY

482 students have participated since the program's creation in 1994  
(DATA FROM 1994-2017)

*"If I didn't have this opportunity, I probably wouldn't be a doctor today. About 90% of my patients are hispanic. For them to come and see me is a big relief. I speak their language. I know their culture."*

**DR. JAIME NIETO**

Chief of Neurologic Surgery, New York-Presbyterian/Queens, alumna, University at Buffalo Post-Baccalaureate



of students who entered the Post-Baccalaureate Program entered medical school

**85%** of students who matriculated into medical school graduated

**48%** of MD graduates went into primary care residencies

**62%** stayed in New York for residencies

(DATA FROM 1994-2017)

**amsny**  
The Voice of Medical Education

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For more information, visit our website at  
[www.amsny.org](http://www.amsny.org) or email [info@amsny.org](mailto:info@amsny.org).



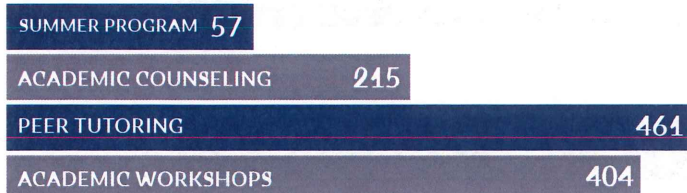
# DIVERSITY IN MEDICINE

In addition to the post-baccalaureate programs, AMSNY's diversity in medicine initiative targets students in high school and college.

## LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER CUNY School of Medicine

The Learning Resource Center provides academic resources, skills, mentorship and support that assist CUNY medical students in pursuing their joint BS/MD degrees.

# of medical students that utilized:

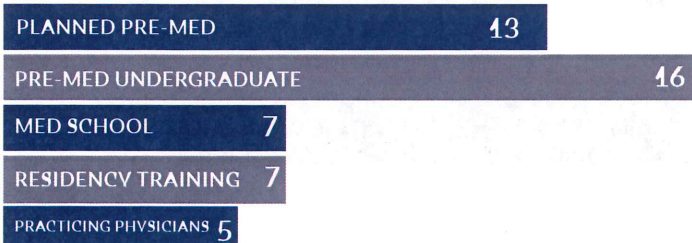


## PHYSICIAN CAREER PREP PROGRAM

Staten Island University Hospital Northwell Health

The program provides academic support, workshops, clinical shadowing and research opportunities to encourage high school students to pursue careers in medicine and health.

**118** students



(DATA UP THROUGH 2017)

## DIVERSITY IN MEDICINE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

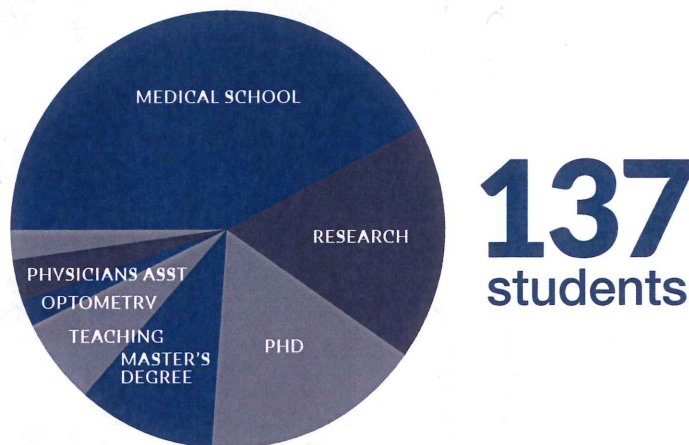
Started in 2017-2018, this scholarship program aims to address the gap in physician diversity. The full tuition scholarship helps medical students from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine by eliminating the financial barrier to medical school enrollment.

- ➔ 10 initial scholarship recipients, 40 students when fully funded
- ➔ Students from medical schools throughout New York State
- ➔ Scholarship pegged to SUNY tuition
- ➔ Up to 4 year service commitment in an underserved area of NYS

## PATHWAYS TO CAREERS IN MEDICINE AND RESEARCH City College of New York

Students are mentored by National Institutes of Health (NIH) researchers, who help them develop and conduct independent research projects. At the conclusion of the program, research projects are presented locally and nationally.

(DATA FROM 2008-2017; TRACKING DATA FROM 59 STUDENTS)



*"At different times in my life, when I'd felt unsure of my potential, AMSNY's programs provided enrichment opportunities for me to learn and grow professionally."*

### DR. MAURICE SELBY

Emergency Medicine Resident, SUNY Downstate Medical Center, alumnus, Physician Career Prep Program at Staten Island University Hospital Northwell Health and Pathways to Careers in Medicine Program at CCNY

## DOH Diversity in Medicine Program Program Funding History, SFY 2009 - Proposed SFY 2019

