



Testimony of:

Jo Wiederhorn, ^{SEP} President & CEO

Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY)

At a Joint Budget Hearing of

The New York State Assembly/Senate Committees on Health

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The New York State Senate Committee on Finance

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The New York State Assembly Committee on Ways and Means

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Legislative Office Building

Albany, New York

Good afternoon Chairwomen Krueger and Weinstein, Chairmen Rivera and Gottfried and other distinguished members of the State Legislature. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Executive proposed budget for fiscal year 2019-2020.

My name is Jo Wiederhorn, President & CEO of the Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY), the consortium of the 16 public and private medical schools in New York State. AMSNY works in partnership with its membership to advance biomedical research, diversity in medical school and the physician workforce, and high quality, cost-efficient patient care.

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) producing 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.

Health Care Workforce

AMSNY strongly believes in the importance of a multi-faceted 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, was developed with these two visions in mind.

In the coming years the number of people who will need healthcare services will not decline... in fact, with the aging of the baby boomers, the need will increase. To meet this demand, enrollment in New York State’s medical schools increased 19% between 2006 and 2016. We now educate approximately 11,000 students a year: a number that has the potential to climb exponentially with three new medical schools currently in the planning stage.

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 in medicine¹ populations (URIM) make up 31% of the New York State population, they account for approximately 15% of the State's medical students and approximately 12% of New York State physicians.²

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 in New York State is vital for the State's health.

Commented [BB1]: Jenny, you have the citation for this?

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

The New York State Senate and Assembly have been very supportive of these programs. When necessary, the Legislature decoupled the Executive's Workforce Pools and provided a line item allocation for the programs. When possible, the Legislature restored the cuts that have been in the Executive Budget. However, during FY 2017-2018, the Diversity in Medicine program funding was cut by 22.5% and was sustained in FY 2018-2019. This reduction forced us to reduce the number of students in the program and to stop funding one program in its entirety. Now is the time to reinvest in these critically

¹ "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.

² Center for Health Workforce Studies, SUNY Albany, May 2015. *New York Physician Workforce Profile, 2014 Edition*. Albany, NY. http://chws.albany.edu/archive/uploads/2015/07/2014_NY_Physician_Profile_Full_Version.pdf.

important programs and expand them to increase the diversity of our physician workforce to match our State's population.

For FY 2019-2020, we are requesting \$2 million for these programs. A description of how we would use these funds follows:

Diversity in Medicine Programs

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 (UB); and three Master's degree post-baccalaureate programs at SUNY Upstate Medical University, Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University and New York Medical College. The admissions process of these programs are unique: students must apply to a New York State medical school and be interviewed by the school's admissions committee. If the admissions committee believes the student would be a good addition to the school, with an additional year of academic enrichment, they will recommend her/him/them 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/they will automatically be accepted to the referring medical school. The attachments demonstrate the success of the programs. 93% of students that participate in AMSNY's UB Post-Baccalaureate program enter medical school, and 85% graduate. 94% of the students in our Master's degree post-baccalaureate programs enter medical school.

The other two core programs are offered along the educational continuum: support of an academic learning center at CUNY College of Medicine (CUNY) – a seven-year BS/MD program that students enter directly from high school; and a program at the CUNY City College of New York (CCNY) that places junior and senior undergraduate students in NIH-funded research laboratories to prepare them for careers in medical school and/or the basic sciences.

In addition, AMSNY would like to fund *Enhanced Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) Prep* programs. These programs will aid underrepresented undergraduate students. The goal is to provide mentorship and to aid students in the essentials of applying to medical school including essay preparation, interview skills, and MCAT prep programs. We would also like to support, once again, a summer program at Staten Island/Northwell University Hospital that exposes underrepresented high school students to the world of medicine by

having students follow physicians in the hospital, work in laboratories, and participate in learning skills assessments while also taking an SAT prep course to help them apply to college.

Attached to this testimony are charts/graphs that demonstrate the success of our programs and that present our plan for increasing the number of students the programs will be able to accommodate with the additional funding.

For FY 2019-2020, we are requesting \$2 million for these programs.

Diversity in Medicine Scholarship

For most students, paying for medical school is a daunting challenge. A majority of medical school graduates complete their education with the assistance of student loan financing. Across the country, the median level of debt for the class of 2018 was \$200,000, excluding accrued interest.³ Further, recent data shows that over the past 10 years, medical school debt is disproportionately carried by students from lower-income upbringings.⁴

In FY 2017-2018, AMSNY received a \$500,000 investment from the State to start 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 scholarship.

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. The Scholarship Program

³ <https://store.aamc.org/medical-student-education-debt-costs-and-loan-repayment-fact-card-2018-pdf.html>

⁴ Medical school debts run \$180,000 on average per student. STAT News, Sept. 5, 2017. <https://www.statnews.com/2017/09/05/rising-debt-medical-school/>

funding allowed AMSNY to award 10 students scholarships and this funding would allow for an additional 10 students to receive scholarships while continuing awards for the current cohort.

We urge the legislature to provide funding to maintain our current scholarship recipients 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 made a significant investment in the New York State Stem Cell Science (NYSTEM) program, among the largest state-financed stem cell programs in the country (second to the \$3 billion California Institute for Regenerative Medicine). New York State's objective was to develop a stem cell research program that would 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 to be a highly effective program, supporting innovative basic, translational and clinical 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 New York State Stem Cell Program (NYSTEM). To date, seven biotechnology startup companies have been launched and 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 2019-2020. In addition, we urge the Governor and the Legislature to ensure cash funding closely matches the appropriation, and that new Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are issued without delay.

Empire Clinical Research Investigator Program (ECRIP)

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 2001, DOH has made 649 ECRIP awards to teaching hospitals, resulting in the training of more than 849 physicians. Sample data that DOH collected in a 2017 survey to the teaching hospitals from the first eight years of the program showed that 73% of ECRIP fellows have continued in research and 81% of those fellows have remained in New York State.

AMSNY urges the legislature to fund ECRIP at least \$6.89 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 16 public and private medical schools in the state. The organization's mission is to be the voice of medical education in New York State, advancing biomedical research, diversity in medical school and the physician workforce, and high quality, cost-efficient patient care.

AMSNY Member Institutions

- Albany Medical College
- Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- CUNY School of Medicine
- Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
- 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
- Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University
- Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine
- University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry
- Weill Cornell Medicine
- Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell