

For Immediate Release

**AAMC Says Obama Budget Plan Threatens Access to Health Care**  
*NIH Funding Freeze Jeopardizes Medical Breakthroughs*

**Washington, D.C., February 13, 2012**—AAMC (*Association of American Medical Colleges*) President and CEO Darrell G. Kirch, M.D., issued the following statement today on the Obama administration's FY 2013 budget proposal:

“The AAMC is deeply concerned about the impact the president's budget will have on the nation's health. The cuts to teaching hospitals through the plan's drastic reductions to Medicare will hurt beneficiaries and exacerbate the already critical shortage of doctors in the United States. In addition, while we thank the president for his commitment to medical research funding, the administration's proposal to freeze the budget for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) would mean that the NIH budget has failed to keep pace with biomedical inflation for 10 consecutive years, a situation that would have dramatic consequences on the pace of medical innovation and harm communities around the nation.

The significant cuts to Medicare indirect medical education (IME) payments proposed in the president's budget would reduce the ability of teaching hospitals and their physicians to care for the most vulnerable in our communities – seniors and the underserved. At the same time, these institutions maintain vital services such as 24/7 trauma and burn units, services that often are unavailable elsewhere in communities. Teaching hospitals also are where patients go for treatment of the most complex illnesses and injuries.

Funding cuts to teaching hospitals—the places that train the nation's doctors, nurses, and first responders—will worsen critical shortages of health care professionals at a time when another 32 million Americans will be entering the system as a benefit of the president's own health care legislation, and an additional 15 million seniors will become eligible for Medicare. Such cuts would mean that up to 10,000 fewer physicians will be trained every year when the nation already faces a shortage of nearly 92,000 doctors in the next 10 years. Similarly, cuts to doctor training programs at the nation's children's hospitals (CHGME) will jeopardize the supply of pediatricians and pediatric specialists that all children need. The proposed elimination of the Health Careers Opportunity Program and Area Health Education Centers, programs that promote diversity and training opportunities in rural and underserved setting, is also disappointing and will hinder efforts to help shape the workforce to meet the nation's needs.

Furthermore, the administration's proposal to freeze funding levels for NIH would limit medical breakthroughs and harm the economic stability of communities around the nation. The federal government's support for medical research through the NIH has helped improve the length and quality of life for all Americans. In addition, federal support for medical research is a major force in the economic health of communities across the nation. A recent report by Tripp Umbach commissioned by the AAMC found that federal and state investments in medical research at the nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals contributed \$45 billion to the U.S. economy in 2009.

Cutting the deficit is important for the nation's economy. However, by freezing NIH funding and dramatically cutting funds for doctor training, the administration is jeopardizing the long-term health of the nation in favor of short-term deficit reduction proposals.”

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The Association of American Medical Colleges is a not-for-profit association representing all 136 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 62 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and nearly 90 academic and scientific societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC represents 128,000 faculty members, 75,000 medical students, and 110,000 resident physicians. Additional information about the AAMC and U.S. medical schools and teaching hospitals is available at [www.aamc.org/newsroom](http://www.aamc.org/newsroom).