

POPULATION HEALTH FORUMS

Transforming the Health Workforce to Improve Population Health: Innovative Approaches in Medical Education

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Dr. Malika Fair is the Director of [Public Health Initiatives](#) at the [Association of American Medical Colleges](#), (AAMC) where she directs both the [Urban Universities for HEALTH](#) initiative and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Cooperative Agreement](#) with the AAMC. Dr. Fair is also an Assistant Clinical Professor and practicing physician in the Department of Emergency Medicine at The George Washington University.

The central theme in Dr. Fair's Forum presentation focused on improving health equity and population health in the US. The main lever that AAMC has for achieving this is through modifying and enhancing the workforce, particularly the physician workforce. "When thinking about the healthcare workforce taking care of the populations we have under healthcare reform...business as usual is not okay anymore," states Fair. Tackling ways to improve the workforce that is positioned to improve population health is very important to the AAMC.

Dr. Fair discussed the social determinants of health and the significant role of physicians in influencing health. The important lever for doing this is through partnerships with the public health, social work, and legal communities. From an AAMC perspective, however, the main lever is the health care workforce. Fair went on to describe the imbalances in the physician workforce and quality of care. Fair explained, "Despite our best efforts...we have not improved the rate of having underrepresented minorities in the medical field."

The AAMC is forging ahead on a number of initiatives to address these issues. One program, [Urban Universities for HEALTH](#), is a partnership between the AAMC, the Coalition of Urban-Serving Universities/Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and the National Institutes of Health. The program works with urban university presidents and health professions deans to strengthen institutional capacity, implement learning collaboratives, and develop metrics to improve health and reduce health disparities in urban communities. It is important to view these institutions as anchor institutions that contribute to the economic vitality of the community.

If a university wants to influence a workforce, what are the main lenses used? Fair identifies these as *access*, *educational opportunity* and *competence*. Access is the university's ability to assess, identify, and serve the needs of a particular community or neighborhood. *Educational opportunity* not only has to do with creating the health workforce for the community, but creating the pathways from the community to the institution. *Competence* is related to ensuring that graduates are equipped with the proper skills to provide effective and equitable care.

Dr. Fair went on to discuss the shift in medical education toward a future-oriented environment that embraces diversity, patient-centered care, collaboration, and ethics, and allows students to be inquisitive. She summarized her presentation by emphasizing the importance of the alignment of the institutional mission with community needs and the program goals to the institutional mission.

RESOURCES

- [Urban Universities for HEALTH](#)
- [AAMC-CDC Cooperative Agreement](#)
- [Public Health Pathways](#)
- [Public Health in Medical Education Online Community of Practice](#)
- [MedEdPORTAL Public Health Collection](#)