AROUND THE TABLE:
THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION

ABOUT THE EVENT
On February 28, NYAM’s first Around the Table discussion for 2022 focused on how the lessons learned from COVID-19 will shape the way we teach our medical students and guide physicians in the future.

NYAM President Dr. Judith A. Salerno and NYAM Board Chair and President of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Dr. Wayne J. Riley were joined by Catherine R. Lucey, MD, MACP, Vice Dean for Education and Executive Vice Dean for the School of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Dr. Lucey has worked to influence both the direction and the continuum of medical education. At the event, she provided perspectives on the lessons already learned from the pandemic and how their application will provide a way forward.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS
Dr. Lucey shared insights from her work and her JAMA Network article “The Transformative Effects of COVID-19 on Medical Education.” Highlights of her article and the discussion included both issues and solutions including the following:

- Support for a robust public health response to the pandemic.
- Adapt curriculum to current issues in real time.
- Graduate a class of well-prepared physicians each year, on time and without lowering standards.
- Protect limited educational resources and treat learners equitably.
- Engage in crisis communications and active change leadership.

A critical part of the conversation included the importance of education on health equity. The discussion included topics outlined in the AMA Journal of Ethics article “Integrating Health Equity Content into Health Professional Education”:

- Give cultural context to case-based learning.
- Discuss how systemic racism and bias cause health disparities.
- Call attention to the demographics tables in research.
- Be inclusive.
- Differentiate facts from myths.
- Scrap stand-alone lectures on health equity.
- Factor in current events and popular culture.
- Promote diversity among faculty.
- Don’t ask a single person to speak for their entire community.
- Ask for help, regardless of your level of expertise.
- Lean into the issue.
Additional speaker suggestions include:

- Diversify ethno-racial representation within educational leadership boards.
- Foster a more inclusive and diverse climate within the organization among academia, staff, and more.
- Re-evaluate application/acceptance criteria, fees, and review processes (including for residency programs) for upcoming generations of diverse students and trainees.
- Revise curricula and bring subject matter experts who are able to offer diverse perspectives and knowledge reflecting health disparities and equities, and co-create solutions.
- Expand educational content that includes topics of holistic healthcare and wellness from prevention to treatment that are sensitive to the realities of ethno-racially, culturally diverse, and underserved patient populations.
- Explore and invest in research programs that ensure the inclusion of diverse and underserved populations from setting up research data input inquiries, participating in trials to contributing to educational resources and textbooks.
- Demonstrate DEI linguistically and visually in all applicable organizational communications and outreach materials, including websites, brochures and other related collaterals to reflect the diversity and expertise of faculty, staff, trainees, students and patients.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

How U.S. Medical Schools Are Training a Post-Pandemic Generation of Doctors – includes discussion on equity, race, & cultural competencies, along with interesting stats on the racial makeup of medical school staff as compared to the country.

Medical School Admissions — A Movable Barrier to Ending Health Care Disparities? – addressing racial disparities in medical education laid bare by the pandemic

Coronavirus Pandemic Highlights the Need for Health Disparities Training as a Fundamental Part of Medical Education – from the Harvard Medical School Primary Care Review

Medical schools overhaul curricula to fight inequities - A growing number of medical school leaders say that isolated mentions of health inequities are not enough. Instead, social drivers need to be woven into the very fiber of medical education.

Medical Schools Stepping Up to Build Health Equity Curricula - As the healthcare industry faces calls to address racism in medicine, the nation’s medical schools are answering, setting forward revamped plans for diversity, equity and inclusion and health equity curricula.

NYAM’s Around the Table, a quarterly series of roundtable discussions, focuses on relevant health equity issues and offers tested, actionable solutions. Events feature Dr. Judith A. Salerno, President of NYAM, and Dr. Wayne
J. Riley, Board Chair of NYAM and President of SUNY Downstate, with a rotating list of expert guest panelists. Each program defines a current issue, shares information, answers questions and provides actionable steps participants can take to address the issue.