

## General Information

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### KU School of Medicine among the top 5 "social mission" medical schools in nation

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The University of Kansas School of Medicine is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among the country's 141 medical schools in a first-ever study on how well medical schools meet their social mission to train doctors to care for the nation.

The KU School of Medicine has long been ranked among the top schools in the country for producing primary care physicians and physicians who practice in rural and underserved areas. Barbara Atkinson, MD, Executive Vice Chancellor at KU Medical Center and Executive Dean for the KU School of Medicine, said this latest study illustrates the commitment the University of Kansas has to training primary care and rural physicians.

"Both the state of Kansas and the country are experiencing tremendous shortages of primary care physicians, and in particular, physicians who are willing to practice in rural and underserved areas," Dr. Atkinson said. "We are very proud that our faculty and programs are geared toward educating medical students who will serve the community, especially since evidence increasingly shows that access to primary care is associated with improved quality of care and decreased medical costs."

The George Washington University researchers who authored the study defined social mission in three ways: the percentage of graduates practicing primary care, the number of graduates from underrepresented minorities, and how many work in health-professional-shortage areas. The study tracked 6,000 medical students who graduated between 1999 and 2001 – the most

recent group to have finished college, hospital residencies and obligations, such as working in the National Health Service Corps to pay off student loans.

The authors of the study note that other well-known ranking systems, like that of *US News & World Report*, are based on the amount of sponsored research and student selectivity criteria. However, they are also based on subjective assessments made by medical school deans and residency directors. In contrast, the ranking for this study was based on specific data that relate to the social mission of medicine – providing care for patients. This information is relevant to public policymakers, especially in light of recently passed federal health reform, as even more primary care physicians will be needed in the future to provide for those who had previously uninsured. The authors suggest enhanced support for those public schools training a higher proportion of primary care physicians.

Among the study's other findings:

- KU ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the percent of graduates practicing in Health Professionals Shortage Areas (HPSAs).
- KU ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the percent of graduates who actually practice in primary care.
- KU ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the ratio of underrepresented minorities enrolled (comparing total number of minorities in the school to total number of minorities in the state).
- Public and community-based medical schools scored higher than private and non-community-based schools.

To learn more about the Annals of Medicine social mission report, visit

<http://www.annals.org/content/152/12/804.full?aimhp>.

*For more information about the University of Kansas Medical Center's research, training, and programs, contact Stephanie Sharp at 913-256-KUMC (5862).*

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