

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SHAPING AND SUSTAINING MINNESOTA'S HEALTH:

**A NEW COVENANT TO GUIDE
HEALTH EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND OUTREACH**



AcademicHealthCenter

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

**A STRATEGIC VISION FOR
THE ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

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Shaping and Sustaining Minnesota's Health: A New Covenant to Guide Health Education, Research, and Outreach

The Challenge

The acceleration of dramatic changes in health research, scientific and technological tools, the economics of health, and the education of health professionals have brought Minnesota and the Academic Health Center to an unprecedented crossroads. Never has there been more promise and potential for growing and sustaining a healthy Minnesota. Yet never has there been more peril in our capacity to deliver on the promise. Health education and research in Minnesota and nationally are in crisis.

Changes in the health care marketplace, with intense competition for patients, profound cost pressures, and greatly reduced reimbursements are threatening the viability of our mandated academic mission. The crisis has been building for the past five years, and the AHC has responded with a variety of cost-cutting measures. Without new investments, we will simply have to cut core educational, research, and service programs.

Minnesota faces shortages of key health professionals. It confronts the necessity of finding new ways to sustain an increasingly complex, indispensable health research enterprise. It encounters an urgency to educate health professionals for an increasingly complex scientific, multidisciplinary, and economic environment. And it faces more than ever the need to build links among the basic, clinical, and population sciences.

We offer in this document a vision to sustain and grow Minnesota's health, to reduce the uncertainty of rapid change, and to assure that the state maintains its deserved reputation for health innovation and quality.

The Academic Health Center of the University of Minnesota is one of the nation's most comprehensive centers with schools of dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and veterinary medicine and programs in the allied health sciences. It is one of only nine such centers in the United States and, thus, is in an almost unique position to play a leadership role in establishing a new paradigm of health education, research, and service. Our future rests on maintaining and furthering the excellence of our individual schools and on leveraging their strengths in new multidisciplinary efforts to improving the state's health.

Our Vision

Our vision is composed of seven principal elements:

1. Create and prepare the new health professionals for Minnesota

The future of Minnesota's health rests with our health professional students. With rapid change as the norm, the next generation of health professionals will require new skills,

knowledge, and competencies. We propose to bring a new orientation to health professional education at Minnesota that:

- Emphasizes skills and competencies across the health professions and the development of a truly team approach to personal and community health. These interdisciplinary efforts depend on maintaining the integrity and enhancing the excellence of the core disciplines of the schools and colleges of the AHC.
- Prepares health professionals to be flexible, adaptive, and have a full range of skills and competencies from basic to clinical to the population sciences.
- Places greater emphasis in the education of all our health professionals on health promotion and disease prevention, the needs of an increasingly diverse population, and the health and chronic diseases of an aging population.
- Prepares our students to be life-long learners and supports the life-long learning of working health professionals.
- Trains our students in community settings where the majority of health professionals spend their professional lives. We propose to develop rural and urban community health laboratories for training of health professionals and developing new models of health promotion and care.
- Expands enrollments to address Minnesota's worsening workforce shortfalls.
- Recruits and trains the next generation of academic health science faculty.

2. Sustain the vitality and excellence of Minnesota's health research

The synergy between research, the education of health professionals, the promotion of health and delivery of care is fundamental to the work of the AHC and reflects in an absolute sense the nature and goals of the Academic Health Center.

The gaps between the bench, bedside, and the community are widening; and the need for increased clinical, translational, and applied research to bridge these gaps is critical. Continued investments in basic research, a core component of the vitality of the AHC, are also required. The health of our society is critically dependent on an increased emphasis on disease prevention, sanitation, ecological sensitivity, and personal life styles. These must be emphasized in our research as well as in our education and service. To sustain the vitality and excellence of our research requires us to:

- Hire additional faculty and insure the research time of our top quality health scientists.
- Invest in high quality research space and equipment.
- Assure that resources are available to support evolving areas of research interest.
- Assure that disciplinary excellence is the sine qua non for hiring, promotion, and retention and for allocation of resources.

3. Expedite the dissemination and application of new knowledge into the promotion of health and delivery of health care in Minnesota

- Foster the development of the state's economy through sustaining a healthy work force and developing new products and services.
- Serve as an objective source of information for policy-makers and an advocate on health policy.
- Disseminate our new knowledge through outreach and technical assistance.

4. Develop and provide new models of health promotion and care for Minnesota

- Develop and incubate novel interdisciplinary models of health promotion and care, with a particular focus on the prevention, treatment, and management of chronic disease.
- Build strong, integrated, multi-specialty practices supported by cutting-edge bench-to-bedside-to-community research.
- Enhance Fairview-University Medical Center as a world-class flagship center; address the management, operational, communication and decision-making issues seriously affecting our clinical programs; and build a productive relationship between Fairview and our medical clinical practice.
- Expand and strengthen our affiliations with the state's health providers to sustain our world-class education and research programs.

5. Reduce health disparities in Minnesota and address the needs of the state's diverse populations

- Increase the diversity of our faculty, student body, and administrative staff. Give our students the skills to care for and promote the health of individuals from diverse ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. Conduct research on the impact of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences in the experiences of illness, responses to treatment, and promotion of health.
- Provide students with experience in rural and ethnically diverse communities. Support research that focuses on the unique problems of underserved populations in rural and urban Minnesota. Develop and disseminate new models of health promotion and care.

6. Use information technology to transform how we educate, conduct research, and provide service to individuals and communities in Minnesota

- Integrate information technology into the education of our students to make possible learning "anywhere, anytime" and enable working health professionals to pursue lifelong learning in health and health sciences.
- Develop health information tools for working health professionals to make the latest scientific information readily accessible and useable.
- Develop a comprehensive database on the health and health work force of Minnesota that drives health promotion and care, enables research, and facilitates public policy making.

7. Build a culture of service and accountability to Minnesota

- Assure that the needs of the people we serve – students, patients, and the community – drive our vision, strategy, and operations.
- Build a community of academic health professionals through a common vision, shared values, mutual respect, recognition of our dependence on each other, and a commitment to service.

Funding for Health Professional Education and Research

This ambitious vision will provide the direction for a detailed strategic plan and finally an operational work plan for the AHC. But, in order to accomplish this vision, we must establish a new agreement on funding of health professional education and research. The relationship that has existed between society and its institutions of health education and research has served it well. As its product, we have the finest system of sophisticated education, research, health promotion and care in the world. But the grounds on which that relationship was based are crumbling and there is need for a new covenant.

Sky-rocketing health care costs, increased use of technology, non-strategic application of health care resources, and the decline in state and federal funding have created a serious, long-term, worsening financial crisis for health professional education in Minnesota and nationally. Clinical income earned by AHC faculty can no longer be the primary source of support for health professional education or contribute significantly to research infrastructure.

Absent a new covenant between the state, federal, private, and health care sectors for funding of health professional education and research, we will not only see a failure to move ahead with a changing society and the remarkable advances in the health sciences, we will see a deterioration of our present system and an inability to meet our land-grant mission.