



May 2-5, 2010 – New York

Theme 3: The Social Mission of Medical Schools in a Time of Expansion

Lead Country: *United States*

All of the IMWC countries have been expanding medical school enrollment over the past several years. While the primary goal of these expansions has been to increase the overall supply of physicians to meet anticipated health care needs, some have suggested that medical school expansion should also seek to address other health care and societal needs beyond additional numbers of physicians. For example, as noted by the Josiah Macy Jr Foundation: *“This period of expansion offers unparalleled opportunity not only to examine existing medical school curricula but also to explore bold, innovative ways to improve the education of a new generation of physicians.”*

Possible missions for medical schools often cited include the following:

- Addressing geographical mal-distribution, including shortages in rural communities;
- Encouraging a specialty distribution consistent with priority health needs of the community, including an adequate supply of primary care physicians;
- Increasing the diversity of the physician workforce to be more consistent with the diversity of the population;
- Encouraging educational innovations;
- Encouraging inter-professional practice; and
- Supporting economic development of communities.

This session would examine the follow questions:

- What is the evidence that medical education can help achieve each of these goals? For example, what is the evidence that location or curriculum can influence practice location or specialty choice?
- Were any of these goals considered in planning for expansion in the 4 countries?
- How much, if any, of the expansion explicitly incorporated any of these as specific goals? If so, how and what has been the result?
- What were the key factors influencing success? What were the barriers?
- Were there lessons learned in the expansion that can be applied to the remainder of medical education?