Health Sciences Deans Embrace Integration Efforts

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We, the academic, clinical and research leaders of the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy, College of Nursing, Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, and College of Medicine-Phoenix, join with our counterparts in the College of Medicine-Tucson in strongly supporting the Arizona Board of Regents' efforts to help create a world-class academic health center at UA.

We are steadfastly behind the health sciences center organizational integration begun with the formation of UA Healthcare. We see distinct loss of advantage for all our colleges if we do not keep advancing our goal of becoming an authentically integrated health system.

As Arizona Health Sciences Center members, we are robust citizens of the University of Arizona organization and essential partners with the College of Medicine in meeting the academic health center's goals of training the critical healthcare workforce for the 21st century, conducting vital multidisciplinary translational research that will lead to new cures and treatments, and providing new value-driven and patient-centered clinical services to Arizonans.

The successful partnership of UA Healthcare and UA, begun just a few months ago, is the first step to providing a sustainable framework for achieving these outcomes. The excitement among the colleges has been palpable, as this structure has provided major impetus to work together to develop interprofessional education and practice models for the future. Without the organizational integration begun with the formation of UA Healthcare, we are handicapped in expanding our efforts to provide seamless interprofessional education and practice programs for the students in our connected disciplines. Although UA health colleges have pioneered a number of interprofessional education initiatives to address clinical challenges common among pharmacy, nursing, medicine and public health clinicians, our prior silos have hampered full implementation of what we have envisioned. Alternatively, the organizational integration momentum has substantively promoted our efforts.

As leaders in UA Healthcare, we envision growing into a truly integrated healthcare
generation of healthcare professionals and providers of care are to move beyond the typical hospital-centric medical model. The 21st century calls for us to join together to design and implement innovations in healthcare delivery that increase access to care for more citizens and combine the latest evidence-based care with outstanding customer service. To lower costs and improve the quality of care for all, to realize the promise of new medical knowledge and new technology, we must coordinate our academic efforts with an innovative delivery organization structured as UA Healthcare. This is where our students will learn the how to provide the highest quality care across the continuum. This is best done by synergistically linking all dimensions of UA health sciences education, research and clinical practice/services through a comprehensive, unifying structure.

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