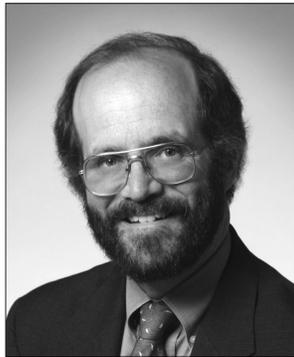




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## Spencer Foreman, Transformation, and Community Engagement

Elizabeth Petty, MD; Robert N. Golden, MD

The bold vision to transform our school into the nation's first school of medicine and public health in 2005 was sparked by the desire to build an innovative academic infrastructure that would improve the health of all of the people of Wisconsin through the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease.<sup>1</sup> This transformation is an acceleration and expansion of the "Wisconsin Idea," with a lofty goal of serving the entire state through strong community partnerships in education, research, and service.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past 8 years, we have actively transformed all areas of our academic missions and have made substantial progress in fulfilling our vision. In November 2013, the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) recognized our commitment to community engagement with the Spencer Foreman Award for Outstanding Community Service.

Spencer "Spike" Foreman established this award in 1993 during his tenure as AAMC chair, and it was renamed in his honor in 2007. Dr Foreman was a professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and served as president of Montefiore Medical Center. He was an

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inspirational visionary who viewed community engagement and service as an integral part of academic medicine. His namesake award recognizes the academic medical institution that demonstrates "a longstanding, major institutional commitment to addressing community

disability.

One key WPP-supported project is the Survey of the Health of Wisconsin (SHOW), directed by Javier Nieto, MD, MPH, PhD. This research program is designed to measure critical health conditions, from well water contami-

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needs" through exceptional programs that reach beyond traditional academic medicine roles into communities whose needs have been unmet through traditional health delivery systems.

Community partnerships, coupled with the resources of the Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP), have been critical in our transformation to a school of medicine and public health. A cornerstone of our transformation has been dedicated resources from the WPP.<sup>3</sup> The program has supported our efforts to create meaningful research and educational partnerships with communities throughout the state, with the explicit goal of addressing the most pressing health issues and advancing public health through the prevention of disease, injury, and

nants to obesity rates, across all of Wisconsin. SHOW will provide a comprehensive picture of the health of our state, and will allow us to identify needs and target resources so that all of our communities become healthier.

Another program that was cited in the Spencer Foreman Award is the County Health Rankings initiative, led by Patrick Remington, MD, MPH.<sup>4</sup> It provides statewide county data that informs health policies that can, in turn, improve the health of citizens around the state, county by county. Based on its initial success in Wisconsin, this initiative received support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to expand to a national program, which now has a major impact across the country.

The Spencer Foreman Award also praised

our signature programs that are designed to create a physician workforce dedicated to serving underserved rural and urban populations: the Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine (WARM) and the Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health (TRIUMPH) programs.<sup>5,6</sup> WARM and TRIUMPH represent an even broader portfolio of academic partnerships across the state with our affiliated campuses at Gundersen Health, the Marshfield Clinic, and Aurora Sinai.<sup>7</sup> These medical student tracks provide dedicated primary care training in medically underserved community settings. A cornerstone of each program is the development of community-based public health improvement projects, which our students pursue in partnership with a wide variety of community programs – from federally qualified health care centers to neighborhood organizations.

In addition to these programs, we have developed educational offerings in global health and public health, which provide students with opportunities to gain hands-on experiences in settings around the world. A recent Human Resources and Services Grant has supported our development of a new “pathway of distinction” for medical and physician assistant students who desire further specialized expertise in public health. A multidisciplinary dual-degree program allows interested medical, nursing, law, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine students to obtain a concurrent master of public health (MPH) degree.

Many of our students embrace community service through a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, which range from the student-run free “MEDIC” clinics for the underserved to volunteer service as health care navigators for pregnant women and as mentors for middle school children. We also have developed rigorous pipeline programs for college students interested in addressing health care disparities as future physicians.

Another key pillar related to these efforts is the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR),<sup>8</sup> funded by the National Institutes of Health. This institute is deeply immersed in community engagement through the creation of unique programs such as the Collaborative Center for Health Equity, Health Innovation

Program, Health Policy Group, Community-Academic Aging Research Network, Wisconsin Network for Health Research and Wisconsin Research and Education Network. While each of these, as well as other ICTR programs, has a unique focus and mission, they share common goals of engaging community and significantly improving the health of Wisconsin communities. For example, the Collaborative Center for Health Equity works with a variety of rural and urban partners, including tribal partners in Menominee County, to build mutually respectful collaborations designed to increase health equity and improve health outcomes. A thriving partnership between ICTR and the Walnut Way Conservation Corp, a resident-founded nonprofit Milwaukee neighborhood organization, is dedicated to developing targeted programs that will improve the health of that area.

We hope that, in some small measure, we have supported the vision and ideals of Spencer Foreman. We accepted the Spencer Foreman Award for Outstanding Community Service at the AAMC national meeting on behalf of all of our community partners who support the efforts of our students, faculty, and staff. There is still much work to be done, and far too many health disparities among disadvantaged communities and populations in our state. We look forward to the next exciting chapters in our ongoing transformation.

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