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Media contact:
Jennifer Schuler
(913) 906-6255
jschuler@aafp.org

AAFP Praises New Report that Recommends Increased Investment in and Access to High-Quality Primary Care

Leawood, Kansas – Today, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) released a new study report, [Implementing High-Quality Primary Care](#), that details out the importance of having high-quality primary care in America and the positive difference it would make for individuals, communities and the entire country. The American Academy of Family Physicians was one of the sponsors of the study.

Building on the foundation set forth in the Institute of Medicine’s 1996 report, *Primary Care: America’s Health in a New Era*, NASEM’s report is the result of nearly 18 months of research and work to examine the role that primary care should play in the U.S. health care system. Some key findings of the study include:

- People in countries and health systems with high-quality primary care enjoy better health outcomes and more health equity.
- The U.S. is falling behind the rest of the developed world in population health outcomes.
- While primary care accounts for 35% of health care visits in America, it only receives about 5% of all health care expenditure in our nation.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries devote an average of 14% of all health care spending to primary care.

“The NASEM report clearly spells out the case for increased investment in our primary care system and ensuring everyone in our country has access to high-quality primary care, something the AAFP has long advocated for,” said Ada Stewart, MD, president of the AAFP. “The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed flaws in our current health care system, including those related to many years of underinvestment in primary care.”

The report highlights that “primary care is the only health care component where an increased supply is associated with better population health and more equitable outcomes.” It then goes on to define high-quality primary care as the “provision of whole-person, integrated, accessible and equitable health care by interprofessional teams who are accountable for addressing the majority of an individual’s health and wellness needs across settings and through sustained relationships with patients, families and communities” and outlines a five-pronged implementation plan to make high-quality primary care available and accessible to everyone in America.

“The AAFP would like to thank the National Academies and the committee who led this important study,” said Shawn Martin, AAFP executive vice president and CEO. “We look forward to working with policymakers, payers and our other partners in primary care to make the study recommendations a reality – the health of our nation depends on it.”

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About American Academy of Family Physicians

Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 133,500 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the largest medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits – that’s 192 million visits annually or 48 percent more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America’s underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine’s cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP’s positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit www.aafp.org/media. For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP’s award-winning consumer website, www.familydoctor.org.