



Editor

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RE: Voices from the Pandemic

As leaders of organizations charged with helping our members educate the next generation of health professionals, we call on all Americans to end the harassment and vilification of public health and other health professionals providing science-based care and policy recommendations during the pandemic. A recent entry in your “Voices of the Pandemic” series described the threats and abuse suffered by a county health officer who was simply doing her job – competently and with great bravery. Unfortunately, there are numerous other examples of such threats across America.

Too often, the treatment of federal, state, and local health officials during the pandemic has been inexcusably rude, personally threatening, politically focused, and patently anti-science. Many of the faculty, staff and students of our health professional schools are in the front lines of fighting the pandemic, as care providers, contact tracers, public educators, and researchers.

Unfortunately, students see how their mentors and role models are being abused for simply doing their jobs. Instead, the public must treat our public health workforce with the respect and thanks they deserve. To our collective benefit, we must create an environment in which they are respected and in which they can thrive. Vilification, threats, and anti-science attitudes are all disincentives to entering the lengthy training pipeline needed to support and reinforce our healthcare workforce. Encouraging our best and brightest students to enter the health professions is important, but insufficient in the face of this abusive culture.

The enemy remains Covid-19 – not the health professional heroes who are working selflessly to help those stricken with the disease and preventing it from infecting others.

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Federation of Association of Schools of the Health Professions

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine

American Dental Education Association

Association of Academic Health Centers/International

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

Association of Chiropractic Colleges

Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry

Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health

Association of University Programs in Health Administration

Council on Social Work Education

Physician Assistant Education Association