

University of Miami School of Business
Business of Health Care
Frenk Keynote
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Opening Keynote: Academic Medicine as a Model for the Future

Academic medical centers can be leaders in the transformation of healthcare in the U.S. and around the world, according to Julio Frenk, M.D., president, University of Miami, and the opening speaker at the School of Business' seventh annual Business of Health Care Conference.

"The value we provide is knowledge – the most powerful force for enlightened social transformation," he said. "We create knowledge through research, re-create it through education, and translate that knowledge into evidence for decision-making at the household, practitioner and policy level in the corporate world and public sphere."

In all those ways, universities can play a decisive role in creating a better healthcare future, Frenk said. In research, for example, most of the medical innovations after World War II have originated from basic scientific studies, primarily in academic institutions.

"Public policy must be based on scientific evidence rather than short-term economic interest or political ideology," said Frenk. "That has never been more important than it is today."

Along with educating students, universities are also "conveners of crucial conversations" like the annual Business of Health Care Conference. "Sharing ideas and strategies is what this event is all about," he said.

Using UHealth – the University of Miami Health System, as an example, Frenk said universities can also be direct actors in the health care system. "For our University, health care is part of our core mission," he said, noting that UHealth is an integrated delivery system that provides direct patient care and incorporates research through the Miller School of Medicine.

"As the only academic medical center in South Florida, we want to be a model and set an example to society, demonstrating the values we embrace and adopt," he said. "Today's universities are not ivory towers, but deeply connected to society, where they fuel innovation and develop future leaders."

From volume to value

Next, Frenk turned to the ongoing transformation of medicine in the United States. "We are seeing an intense change from volume-based to value-based medicine," he said, adding that delivering value in health care has three key dimensions. Clinical outcomes, including safety and effectiveness, come first, while other aspects of value include population health, reducing risk factors and

increasing wellness, and the patient experience the interpersonal relationship with a clinical providers.

“In health care, the notion of value is inseparable from ethical values,” he added. “Our fundamental value is the idea of service,” he said.

Frenk said there is an urgent need for a new U.S. health care model that incorporates the following 11 principles:

1. Anticipatory and predictive care, seeking to prevent problems rather than simply reacting to harm.

2. Person-centered care focused around the needs of individuals. “With life sciences research we have an opportunity to deliver precision medicine to each patient,” Frenk added. “Another aspect of patient-centered care is being responsive to the patients’ expectations, privacy rights and ability to participate in decision making.”

3. Quality-driven care, in terms of safety, effectiveness and interpersonal relationships.

4. Comprehensive care, covering the entire spectrum from prevention to diagnosis to treatment to palliative care.

5. Life-cycle care from birth to death, including dealing with acute episodes of diseases to chronic conditions.

6. Diversified delivery of care from an acute hospital setting to a doctor’s office to home and hospice.

7. Multidisciplinary care provided by teams with complementary professional competencies.

8. Interconnected care through local, regional, national and global networks.

9. Sustainable care from a financial point of view. “We need to be mindful of the costs of care on the economy as a whole, so it doesn’t crowd out other social goals,” Frenk said.

10. Accountable care through a transparent delivery system.

11. Innovative care through continued investments in research and development.

Frenk then called on conference attendees to think about these principles and incorporate them into their own health care, service or business practices. “We have the ability to change the world for the better,” he concluded. “Then, we can start the transformation process all over again.”