

I am submitting my application for the MCACS Leadership Scholarship because I believe that surgeon engagement in health advocacy is essential to providing safe, equitable, and high-quality surgical care. As clinicians caring for patients at their most vulnerable, it is our responsibility to provide a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. It is inexcusable to simply observe socio-economic disparities in surgical access and outcomes without making efforts to alleviate these inequalities. In 2018, in response to repeated national tragedies, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention overturned a 20-year de-facto ban on gun violence research funding. Individual surgeon advocates working through the ACS subsequently developed a national framework for reducing firearm injury, death, and disability, which resulted in multiple research collaboratives addressing this vital public health issue. These successes represent the type of tangible and sustainable change that I wish to make in the future. Such efforts require leadership skills and an established network of mentorship that I hope to build with this scholarship.

The summit is an opportunity to learn how to better design, implement, and revise policies on the local and national level. Previous summits have showcased leaders who have successfully navigated the complex intricacies of healthcare policy to implement programs such as Stop the Bleed. The advocacy summit will also connect me with other residents passionate about health policy and help me develop a network of surgeon mentors outside of my program. In my career, I hope to eliminate barriers to timely, evidence-based, and equitable healthcare through efforts in academic research and policy development.

Our dedication to patient wellbeing must extend beyond the confines of the operating room. While the racial gap in surgical outcomes has narrowed with new research initiatives funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, the stark socioeconomic disparities in COVID infection, hospitalization, and mortality rates reaffirm the need for continued advocacy and health system reform. I hope to share insights from the conference with my colleagues to not only build a sense of communal urgency but also to empower senior surgeons and residents alike to strive for an improved healthcare system. It would be an honor to receive this scholarship to become a better leader and health system advocate.