



Nathan Laufer, MD
President

Chic Older
Executive Vice President

August 31, 2015

The Honorable Governor Doug Ducey
State Capitol
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Ducey,

I read, with great concern, Ken Alltucker's 8/26/15 article on the University of Arizona's College of Medicine, Phoenix (Phoenix Medical School) being in jeopardy of losing its independent accreditation. I have watched the progress of the Phoenix Medical School with pride and have long felt it was clear to all that a professional, excelling medical school is evolving in downtown Phoenix. My physician colleagues in active practice are eager to involve themselves as faculty and the students who I have seen placed in their clinical rotations are excellent. We have, in our Phoenix epicenter, an extraordinary Medical School that I am told received more than 5,000 applications in 2015 for 80 first year seats. The Phoenix Medical School is gaining a reputation as a first class medical school. When that happens it can only be because the Dean has assembled a stellar staff, exceptional faculty, and created a culture of professionalism that is focused on patient care and compassion.

I am concerned the Tucson-based U of A administration, and the new affiliation with Banner, have failed to ensure there is proper governance to secure the essential accreditation by the LCME, the body that accredits allopathic medical schools. Mr. Alltucker's investigation confirms that decisions coming from the amalgamation of the U of A and Banner are out of synch with the direction, progress, and sustainability of the Phoenix Medical School. The article depicts decision makers outside of the Phoenix Medical School's leadership risking its future for what I can only presume are their own growth and control needs.

I can speculate that if one of Phoenix's professional sports teams was in danger of losing its status as a pro-team, there would be a public outcry. Here we have a wonderful medical school, graduating highly competent physicians, which is now in jeopardy of discontinuing unless the powers able to fix this take corrective actions. It takes between 7 and 10 years from admission to medical school to seeing patients independently; to lose a successful medical school in our state at this time will have ripple effects many years into our future.

It is time to fix this serious problem. I recommend you immediately take charge by convening a task force including members of the Board of Regents, and most importantly, a nationally acknowledged expert on the LCME's accreditation standards. This expert should be directed to ensure the task force is fully informed how the LCME accredits medical schools, why it has taken the action it has, and the corrective actions necessary to avert the pending Phoenix Medical School disaster.

From all I have learned, this is a resolvable problem. To fix it, decisive action is needed, and needed now.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nathan Laufer MD'.

Nathan Laufer, MD, FACC
President, Arizona Medical Association
Medical Director, Heart and Vascular Center of Arizona

cc: Robert Leger, Opinions Editor, *The Arizona Republic*