

Women in Medicine: An AMA Timeline

Compiled by the American Medical Association Women Physicians Congress and the AMA Archives in recognition of the 25th year of the AMA Women in Medicine Program

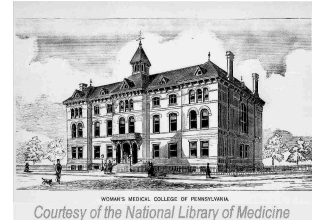
1800s

1847 Harriet Hunt is the first woman to apply to Harvard Medical School. Her application is rejected.

1849 Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first woman to receive a US medical degree, from Geneva Medical College in New York.

1850 The Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania opens, the first medical college for women -- 40 women immediately enroll.

(photo courtesy of the National Library of Medicine)



1857 The Blackwell sisters, Elizabeth and Emily, and Maria Zakrzewska, MD establish the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. It is the first hospital operated by women and the first to offer clinical training for women.

1864 Rebecca Lee Crumpler, MD becomes the first African-American woman to receive an MD.

1865 The first woman commissioned as assistant surgeon general in the US Army (1864), Mary Walker, MD earns a Congressional Medal of Honor for service during the Civil War.

1866 Ann Preston, MD, is appointed the first female dean of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

1868 Elizabeth Blackwell, MD establishes the Women's Medical College, affiliated with her New York Infirmary.

1870 University of Michigan becomes the first state medical school to formally admit women.

1876 Sarah Hackett Stevenson, MD is admitted as the first female member of the AMA.



1886 Mary Harris Thompson, MD, founder of the (Chicago) Hospital for Women and Children, later named in her honor, is the first woman to present a scientific paper at an AMA Annual Meeting and the first woman to be published in JAMA.

1889 Susan La Flesche Picotte, MD graduates and becomes the first Native American woman to receive a medical degree in the US.

1893 The co-educational Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is established.

1897 Eliza Ann Grier, MD, an emancipated slave, becomes the first African American woman licensed to practice medicine in Georgia.

By the end of the 19th century, the number of women physicians in the US had increased to more than 7,000, up from about 200 in 1860.

1900s

1903 Florence Sabin, MD becomes first female faculty member of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. *(photo courtesy of the National Library of Medicine)*



1914 Alice Hamilton, MD, a leader in occupational health and the first woman to be appointed to the faculty of Harvard Medical School (1919), is elected third vice-president of the AMA.

1915 The Medical Women's National Association (now known as the American Medical Women's Association) is founded by Bertha Van Hoosen, MD.

However, women remained a minority in medicine throughout the 1900s. The number and percentage of women in medical school fluctuated, from 4% of graduates in 1905, up to 12% in 1949, and back down to 7% in 1965.

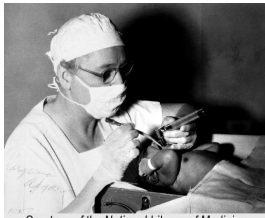
- 1919 Alice Conklin, MD serves as a delegate from the Illinois State Medical Society, the first female after the 1901 formation of the AMA House of Delegates.
- 1925 Florence Sabin, MD is the first woman admitted into the National Academy of Sciences.
- 1942 AMA hosts Victory Dinner for women physicians on the status of the women physician during wartime.

- 1943 Margaret Craighill, MD becomes the first woman physician to join the US Military. *(photo courtesy of the National Library of Medicine)*



Courtesy of the National Library of Medicine

- 1945 Harvard Medical School admits women for the first time.
- 1947 Gerty Cori, MD is the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, sharing the prize with her husband, also an MD.
- 1947 Martha May Eliot, MD is the first woman to be elected president of the American Public Health Association.
- 1952 Virginia Apgar, MD, the first woman full professor at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, develops the Apgar Score, the first standardized test used to evaluate newborns. *(photo courtesy of the National Library of Medicine)*



Courtesy of the National Library of Medicine

1960 Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, PA is the last medical school to admit female students.

Some good news. While women physicians continued to be underrepresented in the profession, the percentage of medical graduates who were women nearly tripled between 1970-1980.

1969 Louise C. Gloeckner, MD, of Pennsylvania, is elected AMA vice president, becoming the highest ranking woman physician in the organization to date.



1972 United States Congress passes Title IX of the Higher Education Act, a law that prohibits any sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funds.

Beginning in 1970, when just under 8% of US physicians were women, the percentage of female physicians began to steadily increase – to nearly 12% in 1980, and 17% in 1990.

1973 AMA publishes the first edition of the *Directory of Women Physicians in the United States*, to address the growing demand for information on women in the medical profession.

1978 AMA provides funding (1978-1979) to the American Medical Women's Association to conduct leadership workshops for women in medicine.

1979 AMA establishes the ad hoc Committee on Women Physicians, with the following physician members: Patricia Stuff (Chair), Sandra Ahlum, Angela Bowen, Ann Catts, Nancy Dickey, Palma Formica, Pamela Gurnick, Kay Kirkpatrick, Sandra Olson, and Lois Scully.

1983 The AMA Board of Trustees extends the charter of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women Physicians in Organized Medicine (Dr. Palma Formica, Chair) for one year and adds a student member.

1984 AMA Board of Trustees establishes an Advisory Panel to the Women in Medicine Project.

1989 Nancy Dickey, MD is the first women to be elected to the AMA Board of Trustees.



1989 An AMA Women in Medicine staff office established.

1990 Antonia Novello, MD becomes the first woman and first Hispanic to be appointed US Surgeon General.

1990 *AMA September Women in Medicine Month* campaign is launched as a national effort.

1990 AMA issues ground-breaking report on "Gender Disparities in Clinical Decision Making."

1990 Advisory Panel on Women in Medicine develops policy report on maternity leave and childcare adopted by the AMA House of Delegates.

1991 AMA Women's Health Campaign launched.

1991 Advisory Panel on Women in Medicine publishes "Women in Medicine in America: In the Mainstream."

1992 AMA Office of Women and Minority Health established.

1994 Advisory Panel on Women in Medicine holds first national Women Physician Leaders Summit.

1996 AMWA is admitted to the AMA House of Delegates. Diana Dell, MD is seated as its first delegate.

1996 AMA issues "Women in Medicine: A Blueprint for Action," a national consensus agenda on women in medicine issues resulting from the Women Physician Leaders Summit proceedings.

1997 The AMA establishes the new membership-based Women Physician Congress (WPC), an advocacy and networking forum dedicated to WIM issues.

1998 Dr. Dickey is inaugurated as the first female president of the AMA.

1999 Catherine DeAngelis, MD is the first woman to be appointed editor-in-chief of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*; and Marcia Angell, MD becomes the first female to assume that post at the *New England Journal of Medicine*.



2000s

2000 AMA elects Nancy Nielsen, MD as the first female vice-speaker of the House of Delegates.

In the 21st century, the number of women physicians continued to rise; 25.2% of US physicians were female by 2002. The percentage of female medical school applicants reached an all time high of 49.2 in the 2002-2003 school year.

2000 WPC conducts first election of WPC Governing Council members.

2001 The WPC Governing Council hosts a luncheon to caucus on key AMA House of Delegates items and discuss strategies for increasing the role of women in the federation.

2003 Dr. Nielsen is elected speaker of the House of Delegates, the first woman to hold that AMA position.



2003 There are ten female deans of US medical schools.

2004 AMA celebrates the 25th Anniversary of the AMA Women in Medicine Program.

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