

Education Facts September 2025

History:

ACLM is filling the gaping void of lifestyle medicine, including food as medicine, in medical education, providing more than 1.2 million hours of education to physicians and other health professionals since 2004.

Services:

Pre-professional, graduate (residency), and continuing education and maintenance of certification programs and curricula for physicians and other clinicians, certification in lifestyle medicine. ACLM also offers webinars throughout the year, as well as our annual conference.

Definition:

Lifestyle medicine is a medical specialty that uses therapeutic lifestyle interventions as a primary modality to treat chronic conditions including, but not limited to, cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Lifestyle medicine certified clinicians are trained to apply evidence-based, whole-person, prescriptive lifestyle change to treat and, when used intensively, often reverse such conditions. Applying the six pillars of lifestyle medicine—a whole-food, plant-predominant eating pattern, physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management, positive social connections, and avoidance of risky substances—also provides effective prevention for these conditions.

Impact:

- Undergraduate Medical Education (UME): Student- and Trainee-initiated [Lifestyle Medicine Interest Groups](#) have been established at 201 academic and health institutions.
- Master's and doctorate healthcare programs: Over 80 graduate programs throughout the U.S., including physician associate, nurse practitioner, physical therapy, dietetics, and occupational therapy, now offer lifestyle medicine education as ACLM-approved [partial](#) and [full](#) Academic Pathways programs and prepare students to sit for certification in lifestyle medicine after graduation.
- Graduate Medical Education (GME): [The Lifestyle Medicine Residency Curriculum](#) (LMRC) is a comprehensive, flexible curriculum that prepares residents to make evidence-based lifestyle behavior interventions. Its educational component includes 40 hours of interactive didactic material along with 60 hours of application activities designed to be completed over a one- to three-year time period. Its practicum component includes 400 lifestyle medicine-related patient encounters, 10 hours of (Intensive) Therapeutic Lifestyle Change (ITLC) program experience, and 10 hours of group facilitation experience. Upon completion, residents qualify to sit for the American Board of Lifestyle Medicine (ABLM) certification exam. Launched in 2018, it is currently contracted into 219 residency sites, now available to 450 residency programs. This includes 27 military residency programs at 9 sites.
- [Continuing Medical Education](#) (CME/CE): ACLM provides over 100 hours of accredited online continuing education courses for physicians and health professionals in practice, as well as an annual live conference. ACLM education supports members and learners in achieving and maintaining lifestyle medicine board certification requirements.

Certified Clinicians:

- Since certification began in 2017 by the American Board of Lifestyle Medicine, 5,124 clinicians in the U.S. and Canada

have become certified (3,810 physicians and 1,314 health professionals).

- Worldwide, 6,293 physicians from 92 countries and 1,715 health professionals are now certified.

Certified Undergraduate Medical Schools:

Platinum Plus Tier

- Loma Linda University School of Medicine
- University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville

Gold Tier

- Western University of Health Sciences

Silver Plus Tier

- UT McGovern Medical School at Houston
- Touro University of California

Bronze Tier

- Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine
- University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine
- Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
- Ohio State University College of Medicine

Leadership:

- President Padmaja Patel, MD, FACLM, DipABLM
- Executive Director, Susan Benigas
- Medical Director of Education, Brenda Rea, MD, DrPH, PT, RD, DipABLM, FACLM
- Senior Director of Education, Shannon Holmes, NBC-HWC, DipACLM

Strategic Education Partners:

ACLM [works closely with hundreds](#) of leading medical societies, non-profit industry associations, medical schools and residencies, health systems, insurers, and corporate partners to advance the field of lifestyle medicine education.

Value Proposition:

ACLM is the only national organization to offer its members: high-quality, standardized lifestyle medicine curriculum and certification; discounted access to the latest evidence-based research, conferences, and webinars to stay current in the field; statistics on the economics of lifestyle medicine in clinical practice; practice and reimbursement models; and networking opportunities. As a result, ACLM members are educated, equipped, and empowered to practice and advocate for lifestyle medicine, transforming their patients' lives and bringing joy back into the healing profession.

Value of Discipline:

Lifestyle medicine can address up to 80% of chronic diseases. A lifestyle medicine approach to care has the potential to arrest the decades-long rise in the prevalence of chronic conditions and their burdensome costs. A lifestyle medicine approach strongly aligns with the Quintuple Aim of better health outcomes, lower cost, improved patient satisfaction, improved provider well-being, and advancement of health equity, in addition to its alignment with planetary health. Lifestyle medicine is the foundation for a redesigned, value-based, and equitable healthcare delivery system, leading to whole-person health.