

**For immediate release**

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## **Medical school grads hear call to lead health care reform**

Aurora, Colo. (May 22, 2009) – Reminded by mentors to care about patience as well as patients, 124 students at the University of Colorado Denver School of Medicine received Doctor of Medicine degrees Friday morning. Under cloudy skies at the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, 59 PhD's and 25 Masters from the medical school graduate program, 51 Doctors of Physical Therapy, 13 Masters of Child Health Associate/Physician Assistant and 41 Masters of Physician Assistant Studies-Pediatrics also received degrees.

The new graduates listened to brief remarks by University of Colorado President Bruce Benson and UC Denver Chancellor M. Roy Wilson, MD, MA, praising them for the hard work that earned them their degrees, but warning of the life challenges ahead.

Benson urged the students to have high expectations, work with others to solve problems, admit mistakes and set about rectifying them, and share credit for accomplishments.

Wilson hoped that the students' experience at the School of Medicine had "drawn from you the best you have to offer in integrity and strength in all aspects of your life."

At the School of Medicine Hooding and Oath Ceremony, family, friends and faculty gathered to applaud the new physicians. Some in the audience held signs, singling out individual graduates. "Jimmy K M.D.," boasted one sign. Seated on the side of the Anschutz Medical Campus education quadrangle, where the hooding ceremony took place, 81-year-old Susan Potter held a stuffed toy dressed in miniature doctor's scrubs in her lap. She had no family members in the ceremony, at least no blood relatives. "I have six students graduating," she said proudly. "I mentored them for four years." She hoisted a small sign each time one of her protégés received an academic hood and a diploma.

Class of 2009 speaker James Kaferly reminded classmates of the "blessings of privilege" many of them have enjoyed and will continue to enjoy as physicians. Kaferly challenged his classmates to find ways to reach out to everyone, regardless of their circumstances.

Medical school guest speaker John Tooker, MD, MBA, FACP, who has worked closely with the Obama Administration, called on the medical school graduates to become advocates for "patient welfare, patient autonomy and social justice."

America's increasingly difficult struggle to delivery quality medical treatment to all of its citizens will weigh heavily on the next generation of physicians, Tooker, Chief Executive Officer of the American College of Physicians, explained.

The U.S. "requires us to be physician leaders," learning about health care policy and politics, Tooker told the graduates. "You have not only the opportunity, but the responsibility to lead health care reform in this country."

The [School of Medicine](#) faculty work to advance science and improve care as the physicians, educators and scientists at University of Colorado Hospital, The Children's Hospital, Denver Health, National Jewish Health, and the Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Degrees offered by the UC Denver School of Medicine include doctor of medicine, doctor of physical therapy, and masters of physician assistant studies. The School is part of the [University of Colorado Denver](#), one of three campuses in the University of Colorado system. For additional news and information, please visit the [UC Denver newsroom](#) online.