In the 2020 annual rankings of “America’s Best Graduate Schools”, U.S. News & World Report ranked UNC School of Medicine 1st in primary care, 23rd in research, 3rd in family medicine, and 12th in obstetrics and gynecology. The UNC School of Medicine was formally established in 1879, but there is evidence that medical instruction was given in Chapel Hill prior to the Civil War. At the time, there were three faculty members and a total of 37 individuals who had attended this early school of medicine. Today the School of Medicine is home to 1,761 full-time and 199 part-time faculty members in 29 departments and more than 40 centers/programs with 192 entering MD students each year and a total enrollment of 752. UNC currently has an integrated health care system that includes both the School of Medicine and UNC Health Care; both organizations are committed to service in education, research and patient care to serve the people of North Carolina and beyond.

The last two decades have seen tremendous growth for the UNC School of Medicine. In 2000 Rex Healthcare in Raleigh became a wholly-owned subsidiary of UNC Health Care and in November of that year, the State’s voters approved a bond issue for higher education and the School launched new construction and renovation plans for one million square feet of existing medical school space, including the Neuroscience Research Building, the Bioinformatics Building, the Biomolecular Research Building and, at UNC Hospitals, the North Carolina Women’s and Children’s Hospitals. In succeeding years, the School of Medicine established two new academic departments and five new centers: Department of Genetics, Department of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery, UNC Center for Infectious Disease, Neurodevelopmental Disorders Research Center, Center for Maternal and Infant Health, the Carolina Center for Genome Sciences, and the Carolina Cardiovascular Biology Center. The Department of Genetics and the Carolina Center for Genome Sciences have fostered faculty collaborations from the entire university.

In August 2009, the first patients began receiving care at the NC Cancer Hospital, a 50-bed, 7-story hospital that serves as the clinical home of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, and in 2011 the UNC Health Care System completed construction on the new Imaging Research Building which houses the Biomedical Research Imaging Center and serves as a state resource for handling the acquisition, processing, analysis, storage, and retrieval of scientific images. The building also provides research space for scientists across campus specializing in imaging and cancer treatment.

Research at the UNC School of Medicine Research has steadily increased over the last several years. In calendar year 2019, the total School of Medicine Research funding was $510 million, an increase of more than $48 million more than in FY2018. The numbers reflect the breadth of the School of Medicine’s research enterprise, with 17 Departments, Centers, and Institutes receiving at least $10 million in funding, and 31 receiving at least $4 million in FY2019. UNC School of Medicine ranked 17th in the nation in NIH funding (6th among public schools) in 2019. All six basic science departments ranked in the top 10, and twelve clinical departments ranked in the top 30 for NIH funding.

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