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In Reply to Carvajal et al:

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We thank Dr. Carvajal and her colleagues for their letter regarding pay parity for women¹ and those underrepresented in medicine² (URM). We wholeheartedly agree that pay parity is requisite for properly supporting physicians who work with underserved populations. URM faculty have been shown to pay a higher proportion of their earnings to student debt³, and our findings showed that URM students shoulder disproportionate educational and consumer debt, underscoring the need to eliminate structural and institutional barriers that impede access to quality care.

We posit that women and URM physicians in academic medicine not only accrue more financial debt, but they are disproportionately taxed in other ways. In their studies, Rodriguez and colleagues eloquently described the extra burdens of the minority tax⁴, and Carapinha and colleagues described the effects of discrimination and work-family conflict on the workplace climate for women-faculty.⁵ While the financial and psychosocial costs on women and URM faculty are high, we highlight the dividends that women and URM faculty also pay. Citing positive factors such as the opportunity to influence the institution, serving as a role model⁶, and maintaining cultural values such as belonging, connectedness, and giving back⁷, are just a few ways that URM and women faculty are resilient, can positively influence institutional culture, and are still more likely to work in underserved areas. It's time these values receive the equitable compensation they deserve.

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