

ACR Statement on U.S. Supreme Court's Ruling on Affirmative Action in Undergraduate Admissions

The American College of Rheumatology is deeply concerned about the U.S. Supreme Court's affirmative action ruling because of the potentially negative impact on rheumatology patients. Adults and children with rheumatic diseases from historically marginalized and under-resourced communities have greater disease burden and worse disease outcomes. Among other factors, a diverse and culturally responsive workforce plays a critical role in fostering strong patient-provider relationships and a climate for optimal health. In addition, educational environments with diverse perspectives and lived experiences create powerful opportunities for learning and skill building that advance patient-centered care.

The decision by SCOTUS to prevent undergraduate programs from considering race and ethnicity, among other factors, in their admission policies undermines the valuable progress in addressing health inequities and disparities.

Fewer than 15% of American College of Rheumatology (ACR) and Association of Rheumatology Professionals (ARP) members represent racial and ethnic minority groups that are underrepresented in medicine. Undergraduate biomedical science programs cultivate the next generation of diverse clinicians, educators, researchers, and scholars. This ruling will impede the expansion of a diverse physician and health professional workforce that represents the patients they care for.

The ACR reaffirms its commitment to investing in programs and seeking collaborations that promote a diverse rheumatology workforce and health equity for patients with rheumatic disease.