



October 31, 2007

**Association of
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Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President

Dear Senator:

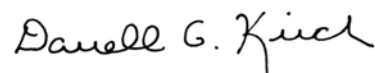
On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I respectfully request that you support the Senate-passed funding level of \$29.9 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the House-passed funding level of \$228.3 million for the Title VII health professions programs when finalizing the conference agreement on the FY 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill (H.R. 3043). AAMC is a nonprofit association representing all 126 accredited U.S. medical schools, nearly 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, and 94 academic and scientific societies.

The longstanding, bipartisan Congressional commitment to improving the nation's health through investing in medical research has enabled NIH to support world-class science at medical schools and teaching hospitals nationwide. Every day, NIH-supported researchers make discoveries that help inform and improve the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of debilitating diseases. These medical advances are transforming the practice of medicine and improving the quality of life for all Americans. Unfortunately, over the last five years, funding for NIH has failed to keep pace with biomedical inflation, threatening to derail the momentum gained from discoveries to this point. The Senate-passed funding level of \$29.9 billion for NIH provides a modest increase that will help sustain our nation's medical research effort.

I also urge you to support at least \$228.3 million for the Title VII health professions programs, as provided in the House-passed bill. The health professions programs enhance the supply, diversity, and distribution of the health professions workforce, and are the only federal programs designed to train providers in interdisciplinary settings to meet the needs of special and underserved populations. As a result of a 51.5 percent reduction in FY 2006, many Title VII programs were forced to cease their activities. The House-passed funding level of \$228.3 million will partially restore funding to the Title VII Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) and the Centers of Excellence (COE) diversity programs.

While we realize there are many competing priorities, it is essential to preserve the foundations of our nation's health care system: the pursuit of tomorrow's cures and a well-trained, diverse health care workforce. I urge you to support \$29.9 billion for NIH and \$228.3 million for Title VII health professions training programs in the FY 2008 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations conference agreement.

Sincerely,


Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.