



March 10, 2008

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to request your support during consideration of the FY 2009 Budget Resolution (S.Con.Res. 70) for an amendment by Senators Specter and Harkin to add \$2.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This would bring the total increase for NIH assumed in the budget resolution to \$3 billion. The AAMC represents all 129 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems; and 94 academic and scientific societies.

The research supported and conducted by NIH has had a profound and far-reaching impact on our nation in many important ways, serving as a catalyst for new products and technologies, creating skilled jobs, contributing to the nation's economic growth, and most importantly, safeguarding and improving the lives of all our citizens. The discoveries resulting from the investment in NIH research are driving the transformation of the practice of medicine through the development of new and personalized therapies, cures, and prevention strategies.

Since FY 2003, funding for NIH has failed to keep pace with biomedical research inflation, and NIH has lost more than 10 percent of its purchasing power. The Administration's FY 2009 budget proposes to freeze NIH's budget at the current year's level. At a time of unparalleled scientific opportunities and unprecedented health challenges, NIH should be positioned to support more research, not less.

We recognize the multitude of priorities Congress must address in formulating the budget. However, we believe there is no higher priority than ensuring healthier, more productive lives for all Americans. The AAMC urges you to support the Specter-Harkin amendment to provide additional funds to the NIH.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell G. Kirch".

Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.