



**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

October 31, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I would like to share my sincere appreciation for your support for patients and cures through your bipartisan efforts to pass the fiscal year (FY) 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill (P.L. 115-245). We are especially grateful for the bill's robust investment in medical research and key federal programs that bolster the health care workforce.

The AAMC is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health care through innovative medical education, cutting-edge patient care, and groundbreaking medical research. Its members are all 152 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC serves the leaders of America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 173,000 full-time faculty members, 89,000 medical students, 129,000 resident physicians, and more than 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

The \$2 billion increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for FY 2019 will support cutting-edge medical research at medical schools and teaching hospitals and help deliver on the promise of a healthier tomorrow to millions of patients battling life-threatening and chronic diseases. Thanks to your leadership, NIH continues to be recognized as a key national priority, and, as a result of the funding growth in recent years, NIH importantly has started to regain ground from previously declining purchasing power.

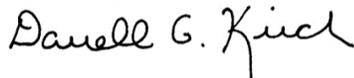
We also are grateful for the bill's investment in other key agencies that promote and protect the nation's health. An increase of \$4 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) will help bring the breakthroughs developed by NIH-supported research from the bench to the bedside, optimizing the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the nation's health care delivery system. Additionally, continued investment in workforce development programs within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), including the Health Careers Opportunity Program, the Area Health Education Centers program, and a new HRSA graduate medical education grant program, will help promote a culturally competent workforce and improve access to health care professionals in underserved communities.

In addition to your steadfast support for a meaningful investment in biomedical and health research, we also wish to express our gratitude for your efforts to complete the spending bill in a timely and bipartisan manner. Enacting the bill prior to the start of the new fiscal year has positioned these agencies to be even more strategic in their funding decisions and avoid the uncertainty and inefficiencies associated with the funding delays of past years.

We recognize that a major catalyst for the strong and timely investments in NIH and other agencies was passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 that brought discretionary spending relief for non-defense programs. As the FY 2020 appropriations process gets underway, we hope Congress will take a similarly bipartisan approach to addressing the discretionary spending caps to enable a continued commitment to the important programs that help medical schools and teaching hospitals improve the nation's health.

Thank you again for your leadership and support for research and health care programs, and the hope they provide to patients across the country. Please contact my colleague Tannaz Rasouli, Senior Director of Public Policy & Strategic Outreach at trasouli@aamc.org or 202-828-0057 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell G. Kirch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K".

Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.