

Friends of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

c/o American Public Health Association
800 I Street NW
Washington DC, 20016
202-777-2513

February 11, 2009

Dear Conferee:

The undersigned members of the Friends of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) coalition write in strong support of retaining the highest possible funding levels for HRSA's community health centers and health workforce development programs in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 conference agreement.

We believe that funding for community health centers and health workforce development in this bill are critical to improving the health of all Americans and reducing the growing economic and social costs associated with lack of access to primary and preventive health care services and providers.

The Friends of HRSA coalition is a non-profit and non-partisan alliance of more than 120 national organizations, collectively representing millions of public health and health care professionals, academicians and consumers. Our member-organizations strongly support the programs at HRSA designed to ensure access to health services for each person in the U.S. and the elimination of health disparities. We are strong partners in supporting HRSA's historic commitment to enhancing the health resources, workforce and infrastructure that lay the foundation for health care delivery in the United States.

We strongly support the \$600 million included in the House bill (H.R. 1) for the training of primary health care providers, including doctors, nurses and dentists, and urge that this funding be retained in the final conference agreement. We also support the \$1.87 billion investment included in the Senate bill for addressing the construction, renovation and resource needs of our nation's community health centers. However, we urge you to include in the conference agreement the provision in the House bill that provides an additional \$500 million for community health centers to expand services to more patients. This funding is critical to ensuring that all Americans, particularly those with no or inadequate insurance coverage or who live in underserved areas, have access to quality health care – especially given the increase in demand for community health centers due to the unemployment and economic crises of the past several months. Finally, we support the \$88 million included in both the House and Senate bills for much needed improvements to HRSA's headquarters building.

A strong investment in our primary care delivery infrastructure is essential to keeping Americans healthy and productive and mitigating health care costs over the long-term. We are grateful for your support in the past and urge your continued support for these critical public health programs.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
AIDS Action Council
AIDS Project Los Angeles
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Physician Assistants

American Association for Dental Research
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
American Dental Education Association
American Podiatric Medical Association
American Public Health Association
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses
Consortium of Social Science Associations
March of Dimes Foundation
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of People with AIDS
National Black Nurses Association
National Disability Rights Network
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Rural Health Association
North American Primary Care Research Group
Society for Public Health Education
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Village Care of New York

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Steny Hoyer
The Honorable James Clyburn
The Honorable Richard Durbin
Rahm Emanuel, White House Chief of Staff
Melody C. Barnes, Director, White House Domestic Policy Council
The Honorable Peter R. Orszag, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Jeanne M. Lambrew, Deputy Director, White House Office of Health Reform