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December 5, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

As you work toward enacting a final appropriations measure to fund the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (L/HHS/E) for fiscal year 2008, we urge you to prevent further erosion of the support for family medicine training grants funded under Title VII health professions programs. The Title VII Section 747 grants are vital to the primary care educational infrastructure and the development of curricula needed to train new physicians on the elements of a high quality medical practice using evidence-based medicine to prepare them to practice in a patient centered medical home.

We were sincerely grateful that the Congress sought to provide \$48.851 million for the Section 747 primary care medicine and dentistry training grants in the FY 2008 L/HHS/E appropriations bill (H.R. 3043) and that \$24.614 million was designated for family medicine programs. However, we are deeply concerned that this important program will again be threatened in a "split-the-difference" omnibus bill or in a spending bill that secures White House support by an across-the-board cut.

The Title VII primary care training program has already experienced significant cuts in recent years. Since FY 2003 when Section 747 was funded at \$92.4 million, primary care training programs have struggled. There is growing recognition of the value of primary care doctors to improved quality and cost-effective care. We must at least maintain our current level of effort to train an adequate supply of primary care physicians if we are going to respond to this critical need.

We recognize that the Congress faces difficult decisions in preparing the final FY 2008 appropriations bill, but we request that you retain the FY 2007 level of funding for the Title VII primary care health professions.

Sincerely,



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James D. King, MD, President
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