



May 21, 2008

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

The undersigned organizations write to urge you to fund fully the health professions education programs by providing at least \$300 million for Title VII health professions programs and \$200 million for Title VIII nursing workforce development programs in the FY 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. These appropriations levels are needed if these programs are to fulfill their shared mission of improving the supply, distribution, and diversity of health professionals nationwide.

In FY 2006, funding for the Title VII programs was drastically reduced by 51 percent, causing programs across the nation to cease their activities. Despite increases for some programs in the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act, all Title VII programs remain below their FY 2005 funding levels. Unfortunately, the President's FY 2009 Budget proposes eliminating Title VII in its entirety and cutting Title VIII. As you know, a March 14 letter led by Reps. DeGette and McMorris Rodgers was signed by 131 Representatives requesting a restoration of Title VII funds. In addition, a letter led by Reps. Capps and LaTourette and signed by 156 Representatives highlighted the importance of support for Title VIII.

While we understand there are many competing priorities in the FY 2009 bill, it is essential that Congress reverse the enacted cuts to the health professions programs to help resolve systemic workforce shortages and deliver care to our nation's most vulnerable communities. Supporting the Title VII and VIII programs is an investment in the health professions workforce and the health of the nation. Despite the administration's claim that the programs are ineffective, according to the HRSA budget justification for FY 2009, the programs are exceeding their targets for the percent of underrepresented minority and/or disadvantaged participants, the proportion of participants training in medically underserved communities, and percentage of health professionals entering practice in underserved areas. We urge you to reverse the devastating cuts from FY 2006, by fully funding the Title VII and VIII programs in the FY 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill.

Your support is greatly appreciated. We look forward to working with you to ensure the continuation of congressional support for these critical programs that are necessary to preserving the health and well-being of the American people.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Academy of General Dentistry
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
American Academy of Anesthesiologists Assistants
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Student Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Pediatric Society
American Podiatric Medical Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society of Radiologic Technologists
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Professors of Medicine
Association of Program Directors in Internal Medicine
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses
Clerkship Directors in Internal Medicine
National Area Health Education Centers Organization
National Association for Geriatric Education

National Association of Geriatric Education Centers
National Association of Medical Minority Educators, Inc.
National Association of Social Workers
National Council for Diversity in the Health Professions
National Hispanic Medical Association
National League for Nursing
National Network of Health Career Programs in Two-Year Colleges
North American Primary Care Research Group
Oncology Nursing Society
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine