

April 28, 1998

The Honorable John Kasich
United States House of Representatives
1111 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kasich:

As you consider the budget resolution for fiscal year 1999, the organizations which form the Federated Council for Internal Medicine (FCIM) and the Federation of Pediatric Organizations (FPO) ask you to consider the needs of general internal medicine and general pediatrics (Section 748) in the funding of Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. We respectfully request that Function 550 be allocated sufficient funds to include the full authorization level of \$25 million.

The Senate's budget resolution would reduce funding for these programs below current levels, primarily to fund significant increases for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). While we support a substantial increase in funding for NIH, we do not believe this increase should be at the expense of other public health programs. We ask that you work for a level of Title VII funding that is appropriate to the important role these programs play in the American health care system and do not follow the Senate's actions.

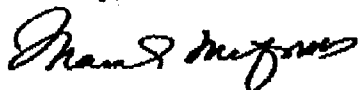
Title VII provides meaningful support in the form of seed money to revitalize programs and start innovative new projects in primary care training. The medical residents trained under these programs provide an important service as health care providers to many under-served communities. In fact, it has been shown that over two-thirds of internal medicine and pediatrics program graduates practice primary care after graduation. In a time when the demand for primary care physicians is growing, particularly with the spread of managed care and other cost-saving health care programs even in government-supported health care, the need to support this vital program is imperative.

We believe the funding for Section 748 of Title VII should be raised from its current level to the full amount authorized by Congress. The percentage of residents trained in internal medicine and general pediatrics programs account for over 30 percent of all residents trained in the United States, making these programs an essential part of the entire health care education establishment. In light of the importance of these disciplines in producing future physicians, we believe Congress is well-justified in raising the sums appropriated for these programs under Title VII Section 748.

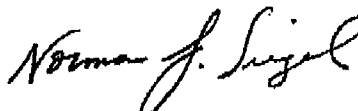
We understand your need to insist on Congress abiding by the spending caps agreed to in the Balanced Budget Act. While we fully support federal spending that is prudent for the long-term fiscal health of the country, we also believe the programs for general internal medicine and general pediatrics are of such importance that they should be funded at their full authorization level of \$25 million. The House of Representatives can show its leadership on this issue by setting a spending level for Title VII Section 748 above that part of the Senate's budget

resolution. This action would be a first step toward Congress taking a proactive stance on improving the health care system in the United States and improving the quality of care that Americans will receive from their health care providers. We ask for your support during the formulation of the budget resolution this year.

Sincerely,



Maurice Mufson, MD
Chair
Federated Council for Internal Medicine



Norman J. Siegel, MD
Chair
Federation of Pediatric Organizations

Member organizations:

American Board of Internal Medicine
American College of Physicians
American Society of Internal Medicine
Association of Professors of Medicine
Association of Program Directors in
Internal Medicine
Association of Subspecialty Professors
Society of General Internal Medicine

Member organizations:

Ambulatory Pediatric Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Board of Pediatrics
American Pediatric Society
Association of Medical School
Pediatric Department Chairmen
Association of Pediatric Program Directors
Society for Pediatric Research