

December 22, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators:

As you finalize legislation to expand health care coverage and to improve the quality of care received by patients, the undersigned organizations respectfully request that you retain the provision that creates the Public Health Investment Fund (“the Fund”) in Section 2002 of the Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962), as well as provisions that specify eligibility for HRSA’s health professions programs.

The Fund strengthens support for the health professions training programs that enhance the supply, distribution and diversity of the health professions workforce. As you prepare to expand Americans’ access to care, it is imperative that we ensure that there is an adequate supply of well-trained health professionals. The establishment of the Fund will create a mandatory funding stream from which appropriators can supplement the appropriations for health professions training programs once these programs have been funded at the FY 2008 level, allowing these programs to expand at a time when there will be significant pressure to control costs.

As you know, a diverse, well-distributed workforce is a vital component to improving access to health care services. HRSA’s health professions programs play an instrumental role in attaining this goal, but have been limited by chronic underfunding. We believe this approach will allow maximum flexibility and will help ensure that support for the programs can keep up with the nation’s emerging health care needs.

Thank you for your leadership and support for these important health professions programs. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Erika Miller at (202) 484-1100 or emiller@dc-crd.com.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Physician Assistants
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 Medical Student Association
American Nurses Association
American Optometric Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Podiatric Medical Association
American Society of Radiologic Technologists
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Community Health Educators
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of State & Territorial Directors of Nursing
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science
Coalition of Urban Serving Universities
Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU Healthcare
Council on Social Work Education
Health Professions Network
HIV Medicine Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
Meharry Medical College
Morehouse School of Medicine
National AHEC Organization
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association for Geriatric Education
National Association of Geriatric Education Centers
National Association of Medical Minority Educators, Inc.
National Association of School Nurses
National Council on Diversity in the Health Professions

National League for Nursing
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Philippine Nurses Association of America, Inc.
Physician Assistant Education Association
Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates