



November 14, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

The Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) urges you to vote to override the President's veto of the FY 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill (H.R. 3043). This bipartisan bill provides responsible funding levels for critical programs that are necessary to preserving the health and well-being of the American people, including the Title VII health professions training programs and the Title VIII nursing workforce development programs. HPNEC is an alliance of more than 60 national organizations representing schools, programs, health professionals, and students dedicated to ensuring the health care workforce is trained to meet the needs of our diverse population.

The Title VII health professions programs are the only federal programs designed to train providers in interdisciplinary settings to meet the needs of special and underserved populations, as well as increase minority representation in the health care workforce. In FY 2006, funding for the Title VII programs was drastically cut by 51 percent, causing health professions programs across the nation to shut down. While the FY 2008 conference agreement does not fully recover funding lost as a result of the FY 2006 cut, it partially restores funding to some Title VII programs, including the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) and the Centers of Excellence (COE) diversity programs.

The Title VIII nursing workforce development programs are the largest source of federal funding that assist students, schools of nursing, and health systems to recruit, educate, and retain registered nurses. Title VIII programs help alleviate the nurse faculty shortage, directly increase the supply of nurses to areas with the most need, and expand the diversity of our nation's nursing workforce. The conference agreement provides a modest increase for these vital programs at a time of national nursing shortages.

As Congress works to increase access to health care services for underserved populations, it is critical to ensure that there is a well-trained, diverse health care workforce in place to provide that care. The members of HPNEC urge you to vote to override the President's veto of the FY 2008 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill and sustain the reasonable funding levels approved by a bipartisan majority of Congress.

For a list of HPNEC members, please see the HPNEC website at:
<<http://www.aamc.org/advocacy/hpniec>>.

Sincerely,

Tannaz Rasouli
Director