

May 24, 2004

The Honorable Bill Frist
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) thanks you for your continued leadership on health care issues in the U.S. Congress, in particular your dedication to improving health care by eliminating disparities that adversely affect the nation's underserved communities. The AAMC is committed to reducing disparities by enhancing the diversity of the physician workforce to represent more accurately our diverse nation. As such, the AAMC is pleased to endorse the "Closing the Health Care Gap Act of 2004" (S. 2217). The AAMC represents the nation's 126 accredited allopathic medical schools, 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, and more than 105,000 faculty through 96 academic and scientific societies.

We applaud the bill's provisions that seek to enhance areas essential to eliminating disparities, such as improving and standardizing data collection, increasing access to care through hospitals and health centers, and authorizing the Office of Minority Health at the Department of Health and Human Services. The AAMC appreciates that you have recognized the importance of a well trained, diverse health professions workforce by reauthorizing the Title VII diversity training programs. Additionally, as more research is needed on the causes of and solutions for the health care gap, the bill's expansion of disparities research at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the National Institutes of Health is an important component.

Again, thank you for your ongoing commitment to eliminating health care disparities. The AAMC looks forward to working with you to ensure passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.