



November 17, 2005

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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The Honorable
United States
Washington, DC

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.
President

Dear Representative/Senator:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges, I urge you to oppose the House-Senate conference agreement on the FY 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. The AAMC represents the nation's 125 accredited allopathic medical schools, 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, and more than 109,000 faculty through 94 academic and scientific societies.

As a result of the long-standing bipartisan commitment of the Congress to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), we have entered an exciting new era in medicine. NIH-supported research continues to improve the health and quality of life for all Americans in dramatic ways. If we are to sustain this momentum and continue this transformation of health, the nation must maintain its commitment to medical research. The conference agreement's proposal for NIH falls nearly \$800 million short of the level needed to meet inflation as measured by the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI). This marks the third year in a row that NIH has failed to grow by inflation. At a time when we face major new health challenges, now is not the time to weaken this nation's investment in medical research.

The conference agreement decimates the health professions education programs authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, cutting them by 69 percent. These programs are intended to enhance the supply, diversity and distribution of the health care providers who deliver care in our nation's underserved communities. 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. Eliminating these programs will seriously impair federal efforts to increase the supply and diversity of the health care workforce and provide access to quality health care for all segments of the population.

We believe that the funding levels included in the conference agreement on the Labor-HHS-Education appropriation do not serve the best interests of the health and well-being of the American people, and we urge you to oppose the conference agreement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordan J. Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.