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**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Majority Whip
United States Senate

The Honorable David Obey
Chair, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chair, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member, Appropriations
Committee
United States Senate

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid, Majority Leader Hoyer, Senator Durbin, Chairmen Obey and Byrd, Mr. Boehner, Senator McConnell, Mr. Lewis and Senator Cochran:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to endorse the plan to complete the FY 2007 appropriations bills in an expeditious and bipartisan fashion. The AAMC also endorses your intent to "make limited adjustments to address the nation's most important policy concerns." We respectfully submit that the medical research conducted and supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is one of the nation's most important priorities, and we urge you to provide additional funds for the NIH for FY 2007. The AAMC represents all 125 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 68 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and 96 academic and scientific societies.



Increasing the budget of the NIH in FY 2007 would achieve the intent expressed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate when they considered their respective FY 2007 budget resolutions, as well as the goal set forth in the National Institutes of Health Reform Act of 2006, which the President signed on January 15 [Public Law 109-687]. The research supported and conducted by NIH has had a profound and far-reaching impact on society in many important ways: safeguarding and improving the lives of all our citizens, serving as a catalyst for new products and technologies, creating skilled jobs, and contributing to the nation's economic growth. However, if the NIH budget is maintained at the FY 2006 level, the agency will have lost more than 9 percent of its purchasing power (in inflation-adjusted dollars) in the last four years, threatening further progress in all of these areas. Even worse, we face the very real danger of eroding the vitally important scientific infrastructure we all have worked so hard to build.

We recognize that the nation has many competing and worthy priorities for scarce federal resources. But we believe there is no higher priority than the health of the American people. We urge you to reverse the recent budget trend and provide an increase for the NIH in FY 2007 to ensure continued improvements in the health and well-being of all our citizens.

Sincerely,

Darrell G. Kirch
Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.