



**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
2450 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1127
T 202 828 0460 F 202 862 6161
www.aamc.org

Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

March 4, 2009

Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN
Administrator-Designate
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Wakefield:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I congratulate you on your appointment as Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The AAMC is a not-for-profit association representing 109,000 faculty members, 67,000 medical students, and 104,000 resident physicians.

As you know, AAMC members, who include all 130 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems; and 94 academic and scientific societies, have a substantial interest in programs administered by HRSA. In particular, our members have been strong advocates for the health professions training programs, the National Health Service Corps, and the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education program. After years of flat or drastically reduced funding for these programs, we are confident that under your guidance HRSA will once again prioritize a robust and stable investment in the nation's health resources programs. In recent years, the Bureau of Health Professions (BHP) has been especially affected by staff attrition and administrative reorganization, and we hope that with your leadership, HRSA will reverse this trend.

We are grateful to President Obama for his support for the health professions programs throughout his tenure in the Senate and during the presidential campaign; we also eagerly anticipate details of the Administration's proposal for an investment that "Strengthens the Health Professions Workforce," as outlined in the FY 2010 Budget Overview document.

Additionally, we are pleased that the pending FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act (H.R. 1105) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, P.L. 111-5) provide increases for the HRSA health professions workforce programs. As you consider how to implement the \$200 million provided in ARRA for "scholarships, loan repayment, and grants to training programs for equipment as authorized in the PHS [Public Health Service] Act, and grants authorized in sections 330L, 747, 767 and 768 of the PHS Act," we respectfully request that you prioritize funding those programs that were most affected by drastic funding cuts in FY 2006:

Mary Wakefield

March 4, 2009

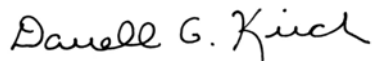
Page 2

- Funding for the Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry programs remains significantly below the FY 2005 funding level (\$88.8 million), after suffering a 54 percent (\$48 million) cut in FY 2006.
- In addition to the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students and Faculty Loan Repayment programs, the Title VII Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) and Centers of Excellence (COE) provide financial, academic, and mentorship support to aspiring health professionals from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds. The FY 2006 funding cuts virtually eliminated these programs, and funding levels remain significantly below their FY 2005 funding levels (\$35.6 million for HCOP and \$33.6 million for COE).

These programs – recently characterized by the Institute of Medicine as an “undervalued asset” – not only train aspiring professionals to meet a critical workforce need, but also help improve the health of the country. The AAMC urges you to prioritize these programs in ARRA funding decisions as part of an effort to reinvest in and revitalize the health professions programs.

Finally, allow me to praise the dedicated and knowledgeable staff at HRSA, including Associate Administrators Rick Smith and Marcia Brand. Their professionalism and commitment to these programs through strained budget times has been commendable, and we look forward to continued collaborations with you and your staff. Once again, congratulations and best wishes.

Sincerely,



Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.