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June 21, 2001

The Honorable Lois Capps
United States House of Representatives
1118 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Capps:

On behalf of the 125 medical schools, over 400 major teaching hospitals, and 90 academic and professional societies represented by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I extend our support for the "Nurse Reinvestment Act" (HR 1436), which you introduced on April 4, 2001. The programs created through your legislation will help produce the new nurse graduates and retain the experienced nurses our teaching hospitals need to maintain high levels of patient care.

We commend your efforts to enhance the public image of nursing and make nursing education financially and logistically feasible for more individuals through scholarships, grants, and other types of support. Your "fast-track" programs for nurse faculty and expanded Medicare and Medicaid training payments will help assure that the new generation of nursing students has access to talented and experienced mentors and are well prepared to enter the dynamic teaching hospital environment if they choose that career path.

The legislation's "career ladder" grants will encourage experienced nurses to complete advanced training—a critical need if teaching hospitals are to continue providing the complex and acute level of care associated with academic medicine. Finally, the National Nursing Service Corps Scholarship Program and its focus on communities with the greatest staffing shortages will complement the missions of teaching hospitals to ensure healthcare access for all Americans.

The AAMC very much appreciates your leadership in advancing a solution for the growing nursing shortage, and we look forward to working with you and your staff to gather support for your legislation. While your proposal will certainly benefit all providers, it will have a particularly beneficial impact on our nation's teaching hospitals.

Sincerely,

Jordan J. Cohen, MD