

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 16, 2010

Senator Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Committee  
United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

As you begin work on the fiscal year (FY) 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$330 million to reinvest in the Title VII health professions programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

As you know, these programs provide direct financial support for health care workforce development and education. In addition, they are the only federal programs designed to train providers in interdisciplinary settings to respond to the needs of special and underserved populations, as well as increase minority representation in the health care workforce. However, due to chronic underfunding of these programs, including a 51.5 percent overall funding cut in FY 2006, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) characterized the programs as "an undervalued asset" in a December 2008 report.

This underfunding has contributed to the current health professions shortage, the effects of which are being seen mostly in the country's neediest communities. By reinvesting in Title VII health professions programs, you will enhance the distribution, quality, and diversity of the health professions workforce in a manner that is consistent both with the needs of the nation and the President's commitment to invest in strengthening the health care workforce.

Title VII health professions programs also have a significant economic impact. In 2008, medical schools and teaching hospitals had a combined \$512 billion impact on the national economy. And each trained and primary care doctor, for example, has a \$1.5 million impact on the economy.

As we continue to work to put our economy on a path toward a sustainable recovery, providing \$330 million in the education and training of health professions would improve patient care and access to care, and foster job creation and economic growth. We greatly appreciate your leadership and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin



Thad Cochran

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