

# ***HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIVERSITY SHOULD COUNT***

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*Association of American Indian Physicians  
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools  
Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools  
National Association of Medical Minority Educators  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Medical Association  
National Council for Diversity in Health Professions*

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July 12, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Subcommittee on LHHS  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
SD-131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
Ranking Republican, Subcommittee on LHHS  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
SD-156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman, Subcommittee on LHHS  
House Appropriations Committee  
B-300 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Walsh  
Ranking Republican, Subcommittee on LHHS  
House Appropriations Committee  
1001 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of Congress:

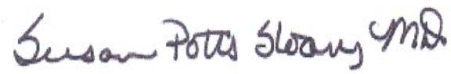
The undersigned organizations urge you to provide funding for the Centers of Excellence (COE) and Health Careers Opportunity (HCOP) programs at the House bill's funding level of \$28.431 million and \$28.440 million respectively as you finalize the fiscal year 2008 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations Bill. This funding level will be an important first step in the effort to fully restore these programs to the FY 2005 amount, which has been cited as an important benchmark by House and Senate appropriators during budget deliberations.

The Centers of Excellence and the Health Career Opportunity programs are the only federal initiatives designed to provide mission-related operational support to academic health institutions, which have a history and track record of training minorities in the health professions. COE and HCOP grants assist the institutions in developing a more diverse applicant pool, establishing and strengthening the academic performance of under-represented minority students enrolled in health professions schools, improving institutional academic, research and library capacity, and enhancing pipeline efforts to undergraduate and pre-college students. HCOP also makes grants to community-based health and educational entities to support student pipeline and other academic activities. Never before has there been a more pressing national need to diversify the health care workforce. COE and HCOP are the federal programs that work in diverse communities to achieve this national goal.

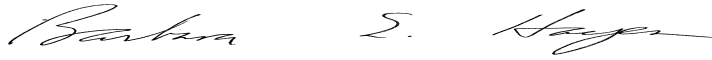
Both the Centers of Excellence and the Health Careers Opportunity programs have been funded during the last two fiscal years at levels that permit only minimal participation from eligible institutions. A strong and robust funding level of \$28.431 million for Centers of Excellence, and \$28.440 million for Health Careers Opportunity Programs would allow all eligible institutions supporting all eligible health career disciplines to compete for funding in these two critical programs, and would reinvigorate the national effort to increase the number of minorities serving in health professions careers.

We are all stakeholders in providing health care to our diverse citizens. With this in mind, we ask you to join with us by lending your voice and support to fund the Minority Centers of Excellence and Health Careers Opportunity Programs.

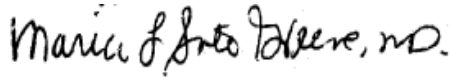
Thank you for the opportunity to present our views.  
Enclosure: Listing of Institutions that lost COE and HCOP funding



Susan Potts Sloan, M.D.  
President, Association of American Indian Physicians



Barbara E. Hayes, Ph.D., Chair  
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools (AMHPS)



Maria Soto Greene, M.D., President  
Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools (HSHPS)



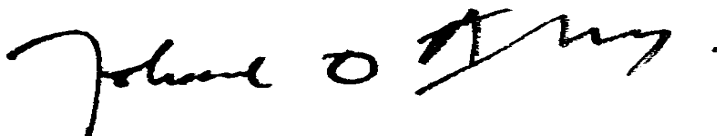
John Cottrell, M.A., President  
National Association of Medical Minority Educators (NAMME)



Wilma A. Sykes-Brown, M.A. President-Elect  
National Association of Minority Medical Educators (NAMME)



Elena Rios, M.D., President and CEO  
National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)



Mohammad N. Akhter, M.D., M.P.H.  
Executive Director  
National Medical Association (NMA)



National Council for Diversity in Health Professions, Chair (NCDHP)