

Memorandum

To: NAMME Membership

From: Lisa M. Greenhill

Re: Legislative Update and Action Alert

Date: January 22, 2007

As you know, time is drawing near for Congress to finalize spending on FY2007 spending. As I reported earlier this month, appropriators have indicated that the current continuing resolution would likely be extended through the remainder of the 2007 Fiscal Year. It is also becoming increasingly likely that as much as \$2 billion in additional funding will be restored to federal programs through this the new funding measure; it is, however, unclear at this time whether Congress will specifically restore health profession programs, including the Centers of Excellence and Health Careers Opportunities Programs, to FY 2005 levels. The total funding request for the new funding resolution for health professions is \$300 million.

Action is needed by NAMME members to urge members of Congress to restore funding for federal health professions programs. This effort will be a 3 pronged effort.

- **NAMME's Write In Campaign:** NAMME members and friends and supporters of health professions programs are asked to write their members of Congress immediately to urge support for the programs. A draft letter (you can and should personalize!) can be found below. Please send this letter to your House of Representatives member and both of your US Senators. This can easily be done through www.congress.org. You can find your members by entering your zip code. Do not forget to request that a copy of your letter be sent to you as well. ***Please send these letters as soon as possible!***
- **NAMME's Call-In Day: *On January 31***, NAMME members are asked to call their members of Congress to urge support for increased funding for Title VII/VIII programming. A list of important points to cover is included below. You can reach your Senators and Members of the House of Representatives by locating their direct phone line information through www.congress.org.
- **Official NAMME Letter:** A letter from NAMME National will be delivered to appropriators in both chambers prior to the February 15th expiration of the current continuing resolution and the passage of the year long measure.

Your participation in this effort is critical to the success of garnering sustained funding for health professions programs. It will also serve as start of a renewed legislative activity effort for NAMME. Please participate and encourage your colleagues and students to support these efforts. Contact me at Lgreenhill@aavmc.org if you have any questions.

Draft Letter:

My name is **[Insert your name and job here]**. I am writing to respectfully urge your support for adding an additional \$2 billion to the yearlong funding resolution to fund vital health and education programs. Further, I hope that you will support providing an additional \$155 million for Title VII health professions programs to reverse the 51.5 percent cut enacted in FY 2006.

Title VII programs may often be overlooked in their role of building and sustaining a healthcare safety net. Title VII programs are the only federal programs designed to train providers in interdisciplinary settings to meet the needs of special and underserved populations, as well as increase minority representation in the health care workforce. Students from these programs have often gone on to work in underserved communities, contribute to research expanding what we know about health disparities and serve as mentors to young student following in their footsteps. The programs have allowed many professional staff people like me throughout the country reach more of these students who dramatically increase and improve the care of millions of Americans.

The drastic cuts in FY 2006 resulted in the near elimination of the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) and the Centers of Excellence (COE). These important programs position NAMME members to grow a more racially and ethnically diverse health professions pipeline, which several Institute of Medicine and National Academies of Science studies have argued as essential to meeting the growing health needs of the American population. Sustaining cuts like those in the FY2006 appropriations undermines an investment into creating a health care workforce that can meet the needs of diverse populations.

I respectfully urge you to increase the funding resolution by \$2 billion and to restore funding to the Title VII health professions programs to the FY 2005 level of \$300 million. With this amount, Congress can revive the Title VII programs and avoid the far more costly expense of losing these unique programs that help resolve systemic workforce shortages and deliver care to our nation's most vulnerable communities.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Important Points by Phone:

- Introduce yourself request to speak with staffer handling health professions. Always begin and end the conversation by thanking them for taking time out of their busy schedule to discuss these issues with you, and do not be discouraged if you are sent to voicemail.
- Explain your position; include personal experiences if and when possible about the impact of health professions programs. Feel free to use the points in the letter, but personalize and expound whenever possible.
- Respectfully request that the Member/Senator support the \$2 billion in additional funds for the funding resolution and a restoration of health professions funding to \$300 million.

- You should make sure the conversation stays polite and respectful. You should never get frustrated or engage in an argument.