



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

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**Concerning Department of Health and Human Services Appropriations for  
Fiscal Year 2011  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Submitted for the Record  
April 22, 2010**

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of increased funding in fiscal year (FY) 2011 for programs at the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). AACOM represents the administrations, faculty, and students of the nation's 26 colleges of osteopathic medicine and three branch campuses that offer the doctor of osteopathic medicine degree. Today, more than 18,000 students are enrolled in osteopathic medical schools. Nearly one in five U.S. medical students is training to be an osteopathic physician, a ratio that is expected to grow to one in four by 2019.

#### Title VII

The health professions education programs, authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act and administered through the HRSA, support the training and education of health practitioners to enhance the supply, diversity, and distribution of the health care workforce, acting as an essential part of the health care safety net and filling the gaps in the supply of health professionals not met by traditional market forces. Title VII and Title VIII nurse education programs are the only federal programs designed to train clinicians in interdisciplinary settings to meet the needs of special and underserved populations, as well as increase minority representation in the health care workforce.

According to HRSA, an additional 30,000 health practitioners are needed to alleviate existing health professional shortages. Combined with faculty shortages across health professions disciplines, racial and ethnic disparities in health care, and a growing, aging population, the anticipated demand for access to care once 32 million more Americans have health insurance as a result of health care reform will strain an already fragile health care system. While AACOM appreciates the investments that this Subcommittee has made in these programs, it recommends increasing funding to \$330 million in FY 2011 for the Title VII programs. Investment in these

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programs, including the Training in Primary Care Medicine Program, the Health Careers Opportunity Program, and the Centers of Excellence, is necessary to address the primary care workforce shortage. Strengthening the workforce has been recognized as a national priority, and the investment in these programs recommended by AACOM will help sustain the health workforce expansion supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and necessitated by the demand for a well trained, diverse workforce that this country will experience as a result of health care reform.

### National Health Service Corps

AACOM applauds Congress for increasing the authorization to \$414 million in FY 2011 for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) through direct appropriations and including the authorized Community Health Center Fund (CHC Fund), which also covers the NHSC, in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Approximately 50 million Americans live in communities with a shortage of health professionals, lacking adequate access to primary care. Through scholarships and loan repayment, NHSC supports the recruitment and retention of primary care clinicians to practice in underserved communities. At a field strength of 4,760 in FY 2009, the NHSC still fell more than 24,000 practitioners short of fulfilling the need for primary care, dental, and mental health practitioners in federally-designated Health Professions Shortage Areas (HPSAs), as estimated by HRSA. Growth in HRSA's Community Health Center Program must be complemented with increases in the recruitment and retention of primary care clinicians to ensure adequate staffing, which the NHSC provides. ARRA funding for the NHSC has been vital in this regard, and additional investment will be necessary to sustain the progress as the ARRA funding period ends. AACOM supports the President's budget request of \$169 million for the NHSC program in FY 2011, which would be sufficient to trigger the release of dollars from the CHC Fund. AACOM further recommends that the Subcommittee include report language directing the Secretary to provide enhanced funding for the NHSC, as required under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

### Medical School Development

The President's FY 2011 budget request included \$100 million for the development of new medical schools in HPSAs. The grant program would be administered by HRSA. The budget projected that these funds would support approximately 20 grants for new academic health centers to provide training and research in community-oriented settings. The goal is to increase clinical training in HPSAs as well as to increase the number of new providers who go on to practice in these underserved areas. AACOM supports the appropriation of these funds at a time when it is critical to support the training of new medical students in order to ensure that Americans have access to care.

### National Institutes of Health

Research funded by the NIH leads to important medical discoveries regarding the causes, treatments, and cures for common and rare diseases as well as disease prevention. These efforts improve our nation's health and save lives. To maintain a robust research agenda, further investment will be needed. AACOM recommends \$35 billion in FY 2011 for the NIH.

In today's increasingly demanding and evolving medical curriculum, there is a critical need for more research geared toward evidence-based osteopathic medicine. AACOM believes that it is

vitally important to maintain and increase funding for biomedical and clinical research in a variety of areas related to osteopathic principles and practice, including osteopathic manipulative medicine and comparative effectiveness. In this regard, AACOM encourages support for the NIH's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine to continue fulfilling this essential research role.

#### Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

The AHRQ supports research to improve health care quality, reduce costs, advance patient safety, decrease medical errors, and broaden access to essential services. AHRQ plays an important role in producing the evidence base needed to improve our nation's health and health care. The incremental increases for AHRQ's Patient Centered Health Research Program in recent years, as well as the funding provided to AHRQ in the ARRA, will help AHRQ generate more of this research and expand the infrastructure needed to increase capacity to produce this evidence. More investment is needed, however, to fulfill AHRQ's mission and broader research agenda, especially research in patient safety and prevention and care management research. AACOM recommends \$611 million in FY 2011 for AHRQ, as requested by the President. This investment will preserve AHRQ's current programs while helping to restore its critical health care safety, quality, and efficiency initiatives.

AACOM greatly appreciates the support of the Subcommittee for these funding priorities in an ever increasing competitive environment and is grateful for the opportunity to submit its views. AACOM looks forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee on these important matters.