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News Release

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Bush Budget Threat to Nation's Health and Vital Research Infrastructure AAHC recommends increased funding for research and health workforce

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 – “The President’s budget for FY 2008, if passed, will threaten the resources needed to protect the nation’s highest priority—the health of its people,” says AAHC President and CEO Steven A. Wartman, MD, PhD.

“The President’s budget request includes a wholly inadequate level of funding for biomedical research, more than \$100 billion in spending reductions for Medicare and Medicaid, and deep cuts in vital health workforce training programs,” says Wartman, adding, “These cuts are misplaced and undermine the essential work of the nation’s academic health centers.”

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) drives critical research delivering breakthrough treatments for a multitude of diseases. Yet for the fifth year in a row, Wartman points out, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) faces static or decreased funding levels. Without an increase in funding, NIH cannot continue to sustain its mission or maintain America’s preeminence in science in the global economy.

Substantial reductions in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement to health care providers undermines their ability to care for the nation’s most vulnerable populations. In addition, the budget’s modest increase in funding for the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is insufficient to support the millions of currently enrolled or eligible children.

Even as the nation faces worsening shortages across the health professions, the budget proposes to eliminate nearly all of the health professions education programs authorized in Title VII of the Public Health Service Act, according to Wartman. These cuts will exacerbate health workforce shortages. The proposal would also end federal support for Medicaid graduate medical education payments, jeopardizing the education of future generations of physicians.

In light of the President’s proposed cuts, the AAHC calls for Congress to:

- Increase funding for NIH by at least five percent to prevent further erosion of the agency’s work.
- Protect vital funds in Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP, including support for graduate medical education.
- Restore \$550 million in funding for programs authorized in Titles VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act to educate and train a health workforce that meets the public’s needs.

“The health and economy of our nation depends on a well-educated workforce, access to health care, and financially viable providers—all guided and supported by leading biomedical research,” concludes Wartman. “We believe that the federal government must support these critical priorities.”

The Association of Academic Health Centers is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the nation’s health and well-being by mobilizing and enhancing the strengths and resources of the academic health center enterprise in health professions education, patient care, and research.

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