



For Immediate Release

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News Release

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Health Reform Needs Stronger Focus on National Workforce Strategy *AAHC Urges Senate Majority Leader Reid to Amend Senate Bill to Strengthen National Workforce Planning Body*

WASHINGTON, November 4 – Dr. Steven A. Wartman, president and CEO of the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC), urged Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to ensure that health reform create an integrated, coordinated national health workforce policy by incorporating four AAHC recommendations into Senate health reform legislation. “... House Speaker Pelosi released a health reform bill that now incorporates the first (and most important) of these recommendations,” Wartman said in a letter to Reid this week. “The AAHC urges you to incorporate all four recommendations in any health reform legislation scheduled for a Senate floor vote.”

After reviewing pending health reform bills, the AAHC recommends that four modifications be made to any health reform legislation voted on by the House and Senate:

- Make development and implementation of an integrated, coordinated, strategic national health workforce policy the primary objective of any advisory committee or national commission.
- Amend the list of enumerated issues to be addressed by the advisory committee or national commission to include the harmonization of conflicting national and state-based regulatory and private self-regulatory standards (e.g., licensure, scope of practice, accreditation).
- Constitute the advisory committee or national commission as a continuously available policy research and consultative resource, not simply as a body of external experts that convenes from time to time to make periodic recommendations.
- As an interim step until an advisory committee or national commission is fully functional, create a national health workforce coordinator to assess current federal capabilities and prepare agencies for their interactions with the committee/commission.

“The nation’s current health workforce policymaking and planning infrastructure is inadequate to meet existing health workforce challenges, much less the additional challenges posed by health system reform,” asserted Wartman, noting that health workforce policymaking historically has been fragmented among hundreds of federal, state, and private entities. “Many of the problems facing the health workforce – including, but not limited to, shortages in many health professions – are a consequence of this lack of coordination because it limits policymakers’ ability to address urgent national needs in an integrated, comprehensive, and effective manner,” he concluded. Full text of the letter is available on the AAHC website: http://www.aahcdc.org/policy/letters/HWF-HR_to_SML_Reid_11032009.pdf

The AAHC (www.aahcdc.org) is a national non-profit association dedicated to advancing the nation’s health and well-being through leadership in health professions education, patient care, and research. For a topical discussion of health-related news, see the AAHC blog, www.HealthPROSe.org.

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