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News Release

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Association of Academic Health Centers Faults Bush's FY 2009 Budget *Inadequate funding for research and the health workforce raises serious concerns*

WASHINGTON, Feb.5 — The Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC) has issued strong objections to President Bush's FY2009 budget for both biomedical research and the health workforce. The AAHC believes the FY 2009 budget reflects some poor choices for the nation for the next year while potentially setting a hazardous course for the future.

"The President's FY 2009 budget does little to sustain the nation's preeminence in science and even less to enable us to compete in the growing global research marketplace given the flat funding provided for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)," said AAHC President Dr. Steven Wartman. "Much of our future economy depends on the discoveries generated by today's competitive research funding of the nation's universities that translate discoveries into technologies and products to improve health and well-being. This is simply not the time to erode the base of the biomedical research enterprise with ill-conceived spending decisions," Wartman asserted.

While pleased to note increases in the physical and engineering sciences through the National Science Foundation and funding to the Department of Defense, the AAHC said that flat funding of NIH reflects a lack of understanding of the forces driving cutting-edge science today and emphasizes the clear need for a comprehensive approach to the nation's science policy. The present approach of under-funding biomedical research will have serious ramifications, not just for U.S. science, but for the nation as a whole.

The President's budget also cuts \$1 billion from programs for the health professions, including the elimination of funding for Title VII training and education programs in funding for the Health Resources and Services Administration. "At a time of growing shortages in the health professions, this budget undermines the capacity to build our health workforce infrastructure, which is already under duress from piecemeal policy making and looming socio-economic trends," said Wartman.

The AAHC urges members of Congress to stand together to reject these budget priorities of the President. "The U.S. must retain its world leadership in biomedical research at a time of increasing global competition. We must also take steps to assure that we have adequate numbers of health professionals to meet our future needs and challenges," concluded Wartman.

The AAHC is a national non-profit association dedicated to advancing the nation's health and well-being through the vigorous leadership academic health centers.

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