



Association of Academic Health Centers

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March 29, 2007

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The Honorable Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Dodd:

I write to express the enthusiastic support of the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC) for your legislation, the "Medical Education Affordability Act."

The cost of education for a health profession often presents a serious challenge to prospective health professionals. In 2006, the average indebtedness for graduating medical students was \$130,000; for dental students, it was \$145,465. Although graduating college students who can demonstrate economic hardship are eligible to defer repayment of student loans, the deferral does not extend through the lengthiest of residency programs. By extending the EHD to cover the full length of a medical or dental residency, future physicians and dentists will be relieved of a tremendous financial burden. Making medical and dental education more affordable will benefit these health professions students, their families, and the communities in which they will serve.

The Association of Academic Health Centers is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the nation's health care system by mobilizing and enhancing the strengths and resources of the academic health center enterprise in health professions education, patient care, and research.

The AAHC thanks you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Wartman, MD, PhD
President

1400 16th Street, NW, Suite 720
Washington, DC 20036
P 202.265.9600 F 202.265.7514
www.aahcdc.org

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