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March 17, 2010

RE: Health Reform Vote

Dear Senator / Representative:

On behalf of the Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC), I am writing to urge Congress to enact legislation to increase health care coverage and reduce the ranks of the uninsured. Because academic health centers have a historic commitment to providing access to care for the underserved, the AAHC believes it is unacceptable that tens of millions of Americans lack adequate health insurance. While the plan proposed is an imperfect one, we feel that, based on the principles of social justice, passage of improved health coverage deserves our support. A just society cannot continue to have large segments of its population forced to make decisions between their health and their financial well-being.

In this regard, we have repeatedly pointed out that true health care reform cannot be achieved without a health workforce that is appropriate in size and composition to meet patient needs. Our nation's patchwork federal, state and private health workforce policymaking is already being overwhelmed by social and economic pressures, and fixing it must be a national priority. It is vitally important that health system reform also address the deteriorating condition of the nation's health workforce with a new, dynamic health workforce policy. Therefore, the AAHC also urges Congress to create a permanent, independent health workforce planning body as a key element of successful health reform.

America's academic health centers are critical to the nation's health and well-being. Through the education of health professionals, the conduct of research that leads to important treatments and cures, and the delivery of comprehensive and cutting-edge patient care, academic health centers are vital contributors to health security and economic growth. Collectively, our efforts improve the lives of many and lead to better health and prosperity for their communities and the nation as a whole. Support for academic health centers will be key as they should and must lead the transformation process toward an improved health care system.

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The AAHC represents more than 100 academic health centers, with a mission to improve 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 is committed to leading by example and working with you to implement effective health reforms and an integrated national health workforce policy agenda.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven A. Wartman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steven A. Wartman, MD, PhD, MACP
President/CEO