



July 31, 2008

**Association of  
American Medical Colleges**  
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**Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

The Chairs of the Platform Committee  
c/o The Democratic National Committee  
430 South Capitol Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Platform Committee Chairs:

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) respectfully submits the following language for consideration by the Platform Committee:

“Our nation’s medical schools and teaching hospitals make enormous contributions to the nation’s health and well being by educating a diverse workforce of future physicians and biomedical scientists; promoting discovery and innovation through biomedical, behavioral, and health services research; applying new knowledge to alleviate suffering, rehabilitate injury, and prevent disease and premature death; and fulfilling this nation’s obligation to provide health care to its poorest and sickest members.

“Graduating more than 17,000 M.D.s each year, the nation’s medical schools make a critical contribution to our nation’s system of care. In addition to educating tomorrow’s doctors and biomedical scientists, these institutions are also major research centers that conduct more than 50% of all the extramural research sponsored by the National Institutes of Health.

“The nation’s teaching hospitals are the training ground for more than 100,000 new physicians, physician-scientists, and other health professionals each year. They are where millions of Americans turn for specialized surgeries, complex, state of the art treatments, and life-saving care. In partnership with medical schools, they are the places where medical knowledge continuously evolves and new cures and treatments are found. They are where critical community services, such as trauma and burn centers, always stand ready. And they are a vital part of America's safety net, providing care to millions of the nation's un- and under-insured. These activities do not come without a cost, however, and the Federal government, largely through the Medicare program, helps offset some of the additional costs teaching hospitals incur in fulfilling their missions.

“At the same time that medical schools and teaching hospitals educate medical professionals, advance research, and provide quality health care for all Americans, they support the health of their local communities by sponsoring critical community programs and services that are not widely offered by other medical facilities, including nutrition and geriatric programs, HIV/AIDS and substance abuse services, and crisis prevention

programs. And as fonts of new medical knowledge and technologies, they are engines of economic development, generating new businesses and jobs.

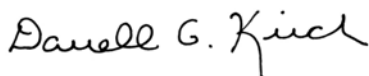
“We strongly support a sustained federal investment in the continuum of public health activities within the U.S. Public Health Service to improve health and protect Americans against the health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. At the core of these activities is scientific discovery. The National Institutes of Health has lost more than 10 percent of its purchasing power, when adjusted for inflation, since 2003, which not only threatens continued research progress, but undermines our nation’s potential to attract new investigators and train the next generation of biomedical researchers. Sustained, predictable growth in the NIH budget is essential if our nation is to maintain its position as the world leader in medical research.

“Strengthening biomedical, behavioral and health services research, improving community-based disease prevention and health promotion, ensuring health care services for the medically underserved, ensuring a safe food and drug supply, and training sufficient numbers of health and public health professionals are also essential if we are to continually improve and protect the health of all Americans.

“In summary, the nation’s medical schools and teaching hospitals lay the foundation for the best medical care in the world by educating and training tomorrow’s doctors, finding tomorrow’s cures, and providing quality health care to all in need. They are the places where hopes become realities every day. We will continue to promote policies that strengthen their core missions of medical education, patient care, and medical research.”

The AAMC represents the 129 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, and 94 academic and scientific societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC represents 109,000 faculty members, 67,000 medical students, and 104,000 resident physicians. We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darrell G. Kirch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.