

## Mental Health Workforce Coalition

November 12, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey  
Chair, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Obey and  
Ranking Member Tiahrt:

As you and your colleagues begin to conference on the Fiscal Year 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriation bill, we would request your favorable consideration of language needed to avoid a disruption of the Minority Fellowship Program.

As you know, the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) was created in 1973 to help address the severe shortfall and reverse disparities in mental health services, and the quality of those services, to minority populations. The program accomplishes this by training minority mental health professionals to provide culturally competent, accessible mental health and substance abuse services to diverse populations. This continues to be an important program as the mental health needs of ethnic minorities in the United States have been, and continue to be, grossly underserved. Minority populations in our country continue to grow – and their mental health needs must not be ignored.

We are very pleased with the House recommended funding level of \$5.093 million which represents an 8.3 percent increase over the FY 2009 enacted level for this important program. We would urge the Senate Conferees to agree to the House funding level. We are concerned, however, that the increase provided by the House—while very much appreciated—is inadequate to fund an additional professional organization, as suggested by the House report language, without resulting in substantial reductions to the funding levels of the current grantees. As you may know, the current grantees of the program include the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Nurses Association, the Council on Social Work Education, and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.

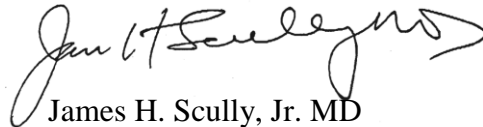
While we continue to be very appreciative of the leadership of the Committee in support of the Minority Fellowship Program, we would urge that the conferees clarify that it is not their intent to accommodate the eligibility and inclusion of other professional organizations in the program by reductions of the funding level for current grantees. We believe that such reductions would only serve to disrupt and undermine the very effective efforts currently underway to meet the objectives of the program. We would also urge the conferees to consider that the most appropriate resolution of this issue may be to not include additional groups in the program until the funding provided is adequate to do so.

We will very much appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Norman Anderson, PhD  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Psychological Association



James H. Scully, Jr. MD  
Medical Director and CEO  
American Psychiatric Association



Linda Schwallie, MS  
President  
American Association for Marriage and  
Family Therapy



Ira C. Colby, DSW, LCSW, ACSW  
President  
Council on Social Work Education



Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR  
President  
American Nurses Association