



April 30, 2009

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
U.S. Senate
703 Hart SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bingaman:

On behalf of Trust for America's Health, a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority, I would like to thank you for introducing the Health Access and Health Professions Supply Act of 2009 (S. 790), which would help increase the supply of the health workforce and help improve access to care.

As you know, from physicians to pharmacists to public health professionals, we are facing critical shortages in the health workforce. Especially as we examine options for expanding access to care through health reform, it is critical that we have a well-trained and robust health workforce. TFAH applauds your bill's creation of a Permanent National Health Workforce Commission that would review data on the adequacy, supply, and distribution of undergraduate and graduate education programs for health professionals, including public health professionals. We are pleased that the Commission would include representation from the public health community and believe that its work will be critical to bolstering the nation's health workforce.

Additionally, we are also supportive of your legislation's establishment the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program for Medical, Dental, Physician Assistant, Pharmacy, Behavioral and Mental Health, Public Health, and Nursing Students, as well as the grants to increase the capacity of academic programs to accept additional students, develop curriculum, acquire equipment, and recruit, train, and retain faculty. We believe these provisions will help address health professions workforce shortages and are important components of an investment in a well-trained, sustainable health workforce.

Again, I want to commend your leadership and thank you for introducing this very important bill. TFAH looks forward to working with you on this and other important initiatives in the future. If you have any questions, please contact Richard Hamburg, our Director of Government Relations, at (202) 223-9876 or Daniella Gratale at (202) 223-9870 x 28.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Levi".

Jeffrey Levi, PhD
Executive Director