

The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
William Lang, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy
703-739-2330
wlang@aacp.org

**United States Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
and Education**

Public Witness Testimony for the Record
**Regarding FY 2011 funding levels for programs of interest to U.S. colleges and schools of
pharmacy**

AACP and its member colleges and schools of pharmacy appreciate the continued support of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. Our nation's 116 accredited colleges and schools of pharmacy are engaged in a wide-range of programs supported by grants and funding administered through the agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Education. We also understand the difficult task you face annually in your deliberations to do the most good for the nation and remain fiscally responsible to the same. AACP respectfully offers the following recommendations for your consideration as you undertake your deliberations.

**US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SUPPORTED
PROGRAMS AT COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS OF PHARMACY**

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

**AACP supports the Friends of AHRQ recommendation of \$611 million for AHRQ
programs in FY11.**

Pharmacy faculty are strong partners with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Academic pharmacy researchers are working to develop a sustainable health services research effort among faculty with AHRQ grant support. As partners in the AHRQ Effective Healthcare programs (CERTs, DeCIDE), pharmacy faculty researchers improve the effectiveness of healthcare services. Some of this research will take place through the development of practice-based research networks focused on improving the medication use process.

- Researchers, including faculty at the University of Illinois, Chicago School of Pharmacy, supported through an AHRQ DEcIDE Network contract determined that a specific drug triad regularly prescribed to patients suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease reduced the risk of death. Researchers determined that other drug combinations increased the risk of death. This research was published in the Archives of Internal Medicine allowing for ready translation of this life-saving knowledge into practice. AHRQ Contract Number 290-05-0038

AHRQ (cont.)

- Pharmacy faculty researchers at the University of Iowa, supported by AHRQ grant HS018353-01, will seek to improve the quality of medication therapy management programs (MTM) which is a mandated service of the Medicare Part D benefit. This research will provide additional guidance to CMS, PDPs, and other payers and organizations interested in improving the quality of care provided to patients in regard to their medications.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

AACP supports the CDC Coalition recommendation of \$8.8 billion for CDC core programs in FY11.

The educational outcomes of a pharmacist's education include those related to public health. When in community-based positions, pharmacists are frequently providers of first contact. The opportunity to identify potential public health threats through regular interaction with patients provides public health agencies such as the CDC with on-the-ground epidemiologists. Pharmacists support the public health system through the risk identification of patients seeking medications associated with preventing and treating travel-related illnesses. Pharmacy faculty are engaged in CDC-supported research in areas such as immunization delivery, integration of pharmacogenetics in the pharmacy curriculum and inclusion of pharmacists in emergency preparedness. Information from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is essential for faculty engaged in health services research and for the professional education of the pharmacist.

- Researchers at the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy will be supported in their work to develop and test new malaria drugs by CDC grant [3U01CI000211-05S1](#).
- Jeanine Mount, CDC-supported member of the faculty at the University of Wisconsin, is engaged in research to determine how pharmacists can be better utilized to increase the vaccination rates across our nation. 1U01IP000060-01

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

AACP supports the Friends of HRSA recommendation of \$8.5 billion for FY11.

HRSA is a federal agency with a wide-range of policy and service components. Faculty at colleges and schools of pharmacy are integral to the success of many of these. Colleges and schools of pharmacy are the administrative units for interprofessional and community-based linkages programs including geriatric education centers and area health education centers. Pharmacy faculty are supported in their research efforts regarding rural health issues through the Office of Rural Health Policy. Pharmacy students benefit from diversity program funding including Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students.

Office of Pharmacy Affairs

AACP recommends a program funding of \$5 million for FY11 for the Office of Pharmacy Affairs.

AACP member institutions are actively engaged in Office of Pharmacy Affairs (OPA) efforts to improve the quality of care for patients in federally-qualified health centers and entities eligible to participate in the 340B drug discount program. The success of the HRSA Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Collaborative is a direct result of past OPA actions linking colleges and schools of pharmacy with federally-qualified health centers. www.hrsa.gov/patientsafety The result of these links has been the establishment of medical homes that improve health outcomes for underserved and disadvantaged patients

HRSA

OPA (cont.)

through the integration of clinical pharmacy services. The Office of Pharmacy Affairs would benefit from a direct line-item appropriation so that public-private partnerships aimed at improving the quality of care provided at federally qualified health centers can be sustained and expanded.

Poison Control Centers

Colleges and schools of pharmacy are supported by HRSA grant funding for the operation of nine of the 42 poison control centers administered by HRSA.

- Jill E. Michels, faculty member from the University of South Carolina – South Carolina College of Pharmacy (USC), and the Palmetto Poison Center (PPC) were awarded a \$310,000 grant from HRSA. The PPC is housed at the College of Pharmacy and serves all 46 counties in South Carolina receiving over 37,000 calls per year for information and advice. The PPC provides services free-of-charge to the public and health professionals 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year. A recent USC study found that for every dollar spent on the Palmetto Poison Center, more than \$7 were saved in unnecessary healthcare costs, including emergency room and physician visits, ambulance services, and unnecessary medical treatments.

<http://poison.sc.edu/about.html>

Bureau of Health Professions (BHP)

AACP supports the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) recommendation of \$600 million for Title VII and VIII programs in FY11.

AACP member institutions are active participants in BHP programs. Two colleges of pharmacy are current grantees in the Centers of Excellence program (Xavier University - Louisiana, University of Montana). This program focuses on increasing the number of underserved individuals attending health professions institutions. Colleges and schools of pharmacy are also part of Title VII interprofessional and community-based linkages programs including Geriatric Education Centers and Area Health Education Centers. These programs are essential for creating the educational approaches necessary for the Institute of Medicine's recommendations of improving quality through team-based, patient-centered care.

Office of Telehealth Advancement

Technology is an important component for improving healthcare quality and maintaining or increasing access to care. Colleges and schools of pharmacy utilize technology to increase the reach of education to aspiring and current professionals.

- The University of Arizona is supported by a HRSA telehealth grant. "The health will include a state-of-the-art learning center designed for contextual-based learning by interdisciplinary teams of students of various healthcare professions including medicine, nursing and pharmacy. Curricula will be developed to take advantage of both on-site and extramural telemedicine patients. Distance education will also be provided to clinical sites."
<http://www.telemedicine.arizona.edu/>
- North Dakota State University College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Sciences uses grant funding to maintain access to pharmacy services in rural, underserved areas of North Dakota. This program helps over 40,000 rural citizens maintain access to pharmacy services and also supports rural hospital pharmacies.
http://hrsa.gov/telehealth/grantedirectory/overview_nd.htm

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

AACP recommends a funding level of \$3.7 billion for FDA programs in FY11.

Academic pharmacy is working with the FDA to fulfill its strategic goals and the responsibilities assigned to the agency through the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act. The FDA sees the colleges and schools of pharmacy as essential partners in assuring the public has access to a healthcare professional well versed in the science of safety. Pharmacy faculty and students provide the FDA with a “go-to” group to create the educational outcomes that will empower patients to be members of the healthcare team. The FDA also supports pharmacy schools working to improve the drug manufacturing process.

- Carole L. Kimberlin, a professor, and Almut G. Winterstein, an assistant professor at the University of Florida College of Pharmacy Department of Pharmaceutical Outcomes and Policy, received a one-year \$184,229 award from the Food and Drug Administration to conduct an evaluation of Consumer Medication Information leaflets on selected prescription medications from community pharmacies throughout the United States.
- Thomas C. Dowling’s research, “Evaluation of Biopharmaceutics Classification System Class 3 Drugs for Possible Biowaivers,” is supported by an FDA grant.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

AACP supports the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research recommendation of \$35 billion for FY11.

Pharmacy faculty are supported in their research by nearly every institute at the NIH. The NIH-supported research at AACP member institutions spans the research spectrum from the creation of new knowledge through the translation of that new knowledge to providers and patients. In 2009, pharmacy faculty researchers received more than \$320 million in grant support from the NIH. AACP member institutions are concerned, as are other health professions education organizations, of the need to increase the number of biomedical researchers. This concern is supported by an initial grant funding success rate that has never been more than 30 percent in the last decade. <http://report.nih.gov/NIHDataBook/Charts/SlideGen.aspx?chartId=126&catId=13>

- Dr. Rueben A. Gonzales, professor of pharmacology and toxicology at The University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy, has been awarded a \$2.8 million MERIT Award from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). Gonzales’ research involves chemical changes in the brain that underlie alcohol drinking. Of particular interest is the role of dopamine, a chemical produced and found in the brain that relays, amplifies or modulates signals between a neuron and another cell.
- Dr. Stefan Balaz, chair and professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Vermont campus, has been awarded a five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the amount of \$1,350,000. Dr. Balaz and his team will develop an approach that will model how chemicals are transported and accumulate in biological membranes, helping researchers predict how new drug candidates are likely to behave in the body.

NIH (cont.)

- The National Institutes of Health has awarded a competitive grant of more than \$777,000 to the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy and Johns Hopkins University researchers to study the costs, risks and benefits of treatments for blood disorders that affect more than 10,000 elderly patients each year. The challenge grant targets a widely accepted practice by clinicians of controlling anemia of myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS), sometimes called pre-leukemias, with erythropoietin, a hormone-controlling red blood cell production.
- A new study by University of Houston College of Pharmacy (UHCOP) researchers suggests that long-term endurance exercise may slow the progression of Parkinson's disease by protecting key cells involved in maintaining function and movement. The research by UHCOP pharmacology graduate student Gaurav Patki and Dr. Yuen-Sum "Vincent" Lau was one of only 12 presentations, out of a pool of nearly 16,000 submissions, to be selected for a news conference at Neuroscience 2009, the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience in October 2009. The research was supported by a grant by the National Institute for Neurological Disease and Stroke.

US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPPORTED PROGRAMS AT COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS OF PHARMACY

AACP supports the recommendation of the Student Aid Alliance that the:

- 1. Perkins Loan Program Federal Capital Contribution should be increased to the newly reauthorized level of \$300 million and loan cancellations should be increased to \$125 million.**
- 2. Pell Grant maximum be increased to \$5710.**
- 3. Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) should be increased to the authorized level of \$400 million.**
- 4. Graduate level programs should be increased to \$126 million.**

AACP recommends a funding level of \$160 million for the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE).

The Department of Education supports the education of healthcare professionals by:

- assuring access to education through student financial aid programs;
- supporting educational research allows faculty to determine improvements in educational approaches; and
- maintaining the quality of higher education through the approval of accrediting agencies.

AACP actively supports increased funding for undergraduate student financial assistance programs. Admission to into the pharmacy professional degree program requires at least two years of undergraduate preparation. Student financial assistance programs are essential to assuring colleges and schools of pharmacy are accessible to qualified students. Likewise, financial assistance programs that support graduate education are an important component of creating the next generation of scientists and educators that both our nation and higher education depend on.