

## Senate Appropriations Update

July 14, 2005

The Senate Appropriations Committee has completed work on the appropriations bill for FY06 that funds health services and health research programs. And, the news is surprisingly good for SGIM and its members.

AHRQ: The bill appropriates \$323,695,000 to AHRQ. This is an *increase* of \$5.0 million over last year and over the President's request. Of great interest is the following language in the Committee Report:

The Committee notes that the Department reallocated \$11,518,000 from AHRQ in fiscal year 2005 to fund the Department's health information technology initiative. While the Committee strongly supports this initiative, it notes that this reallocation delayed the start of several non-patient safety grant programs. Research outside of targeted areas such as patient safety, health IT and comparative effectiveness is a critical part of AHRQ's mission yet these grants are a diminishing portion of the agency's research portfolio. The Committee notes that the important initiatives like the patient safety program were based on investigator-initiated research. The strongly urges AHRQ to maximize investigator-initiated research.

Title VII: The bill appropriates \$454,393,000 for the HRSA health professions program. This is an *increase* of \$4,180,000 over last year's level and restores all the programs the President's budget eliminated. Of most direct impact for GIM, the bill appropriates \$90,000,000 million to the "Training in Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry" programs, which is an *increase* of \$1,184,000 above last year and the precise figure that SGIM leadership requested on Capitol Hill Day.

Needless to say, SGIM is very pleased with these results. The bill still has to be passed by the Senate. Then, there will be a conference between the two houses to reach final numbers. SGIM will continue to work hard to assure funding for these important programs.