



A Public Entity

INLAND EMPIRE HEALTH PLAN

January 27, 2009

Phyllis A. Guze, M.D.
School of Medicine Planning Office
University of Riverside
Riverside, CA 92521

Dear Dr. Guze:

Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) is a public entity health plan located in San Bernardino, CA. We currently serve over 370,000 San Bernardino and Riverside County residents in the following programs: Medi-Cal, the Healthy Families Program, Healthy Kids, and a Medicare Advantage Special Needs Program. As a not-for-profit organization, we are deeply committed to the advancement of our community and engage in many innovative initiatives to expand access to healthcare.

For these reasons, IEHP strongly supports the medical school initiative at the University of California, Riverside (UCR). Inland Southern California, one of the most rapidly growing regions in the state, is facing a physician shortage of crisis proportion. The number of practicing physicians per 100,000 persons in the region is a little more than half that of the statewide average and, by 2015, the doctor shortfall could be as high as 53 percent. The region trails much of the state in several key health indicators, such as high incidence of coronary heart disease and diabetes, and in infant mortality.

UCR's innovative vision for the medical school – focused squarely on regional healthcare needs and building on its existing highly praised medical education program – has been approved by the University of California Board of Regents. A public investment is now needed to launch the medical school so that we can begin to confront the physician shortage and thereby expand access to healthcare from our currently underserved population.

Sincerely,

Bradley Gilbert, M.D., M.P.P.
IEHP Chief Executive Officer

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