

August 14, 2015

The Honorable Jon Tester
U.S. Senate
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I offer support for the *Delivering Opportunities for Care and Services (DOCS) for Veterans Act of 2015*. Thank you for your strong commitment and leadership in introducing this important legislation, which seeks to support physicians and other health professionals who provide necessary health care services to our nation's veterans.

AACOM represents the 31 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States. These colleges are accredited to deliver instruction at 44 teaching locations in 29 states. In the 2014-2015 academic year, these colleges educated over 24,600 future physicians – more than 25 percent of new U.S. medical students.

AACOM lauds your efforts in working to support physicians treating our veteran population in our nation's health care system. Furthermore, we strongly support policies, including the *Delivering Opportunities for Care and Services for Veterans Act of 2015*, which would eliminate a critical barrier to ensure that the additional 1,500 medical residency slots authorized by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 would not count toward the current cap in place by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 on Medicare-funded graduate medical education (GME) positions.

Moreover, this legislation is vital to ensure that additional GME positions are available, by acknowledging the importance of a well-established residency program, and extending the authorization of the Choice Act to support development and growth of residency programs at VA medical facilities. This legislation will result in expanded access to veteran patient care and is of high importance in creating more partnerships to support serving the many rural and underserved areas across the country.

On behalf of AACOM, I offer our support for the *Delivering Opportunities for Care and Services for Veterans Act of 2015*, and I thank you for your steadfast leadership and dedication on working to support a health care system that will enable current osteopathic medical students and future osteopathic physicians to provide high quality care to the patients they serve.

Respectfully,



Stephen C. Shannon, D.O., M.P.H.
President and CEO