



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

February 1, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins  
United States Senate  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester  
United States Senate  
311 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senate  
172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Doug Jones  
United States Senate  
326 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman  
United States Senate  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
United States Senate  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kamala Harris  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Collins, Tester, Capito, Jones, Boozman, Manchin, and Harris:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), thank you for your unceasing bipartisan commitment and leadership in championing the Health Resources and Services Administration's Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program by introducing S. 304, the *Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2019*. We offer our strong support of this legislation.

AACOM represents the 35 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States. These colleges are accredited to deliver instruction at 55 teaching locations in 32 states. In the current academic year, these colleges are educating more than 30,000 future physicians—25 percent of all U.S. medical students. Six of the colleges are public and 29 are private institutions. AACOM was founded in 1898 to support and assist the nation's osteopathic medical schools, and to serve as a unifying voice for osteopathic medical education. The association leads and advocates for the osteopathic medical education community to improve the health of the public.

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With your introduction of S. 304, the osteopathic medical education community commends your bipartisan efforts to support this critical program that produces primary care physicians in medically underserved communities across our country by reauthorizing it for five years and providing enhanced funding and a pathway for growth in the number of residents trained.

Established in 2010 and reauthorized in 2015 and 2018, the THCGME Program has been a notable success. In the 2017-2018 academic year, the program supported the training of 732 residents in 57 primary care residency programs, across 24 states. Since 2011, the program has supported the training of over 630 new primary care physicians and dentists that have graduated and entered the workforce. Importantly, physicians trained in THC programs are more likely to practice in underserved communities, increasing access to care for the country's most vulnerable patient populations.

As you know, the continuation of this program is vital to addressing primary care physician workforce shortages and delivering health care services to vulnerable patients in need. It has encouraged greater connections and services between traditionally underserved areas and the emerging physician workforce by creating opportunities for medical students to carry out their required training where their services are most needed. The THCGME Program has been highly effective in transitioning residents into medically underserved areas, with more than 80 percent remaining in primary care practice and over half remaining in high-need communities.

On behalf of the nation's osteopathic medical schools and the students they train, thank you for your steadfast leadership, and I look forward to continuing our work together to support a health care system that will enable osteopathic medical students and future physicians to provide primary health care to the patients they serve. We look forward to working together on this important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Shannon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Stephen C. Shannon, DO, MPH  
President and CEO