

March 22, 2021

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Senators Menendez and Boozman:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I offer strong support for S.834, the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021*. Thank you for your leadership in reintroducing this legislation, which seeks to address the nation's physician workforce shortage and expand Medicare-funded graduate medical education (GME) residency positions in programs across the country.

AACOM leads and advocates for the full continuum of osteopathic medical education to improve the health of the public. Founded in 1898 to support and assist the nation's osteopathic medical schools, AACOM represents all 37 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine—educating nearly 31,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students—at 58 teaching locations in 33 U.S. states, as well as osteopathic GME professionals and trainees at U.S. medical centers, hospitals, clinics, and health systems.

As educators of future physicians, we support policies which aim to provide a solution to the physician workforce shortage. This legislation is timely, as the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues of clinician burnout, increased physician retirement, and a growing and aging population. The *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021* would build on the 1,000 new Medicare-supported GME positions included in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021* and give priority to hospitals in rural and medically underserved areas, hospitals in states with new medical schools, and hospitals already training over their caps. For the rising number of osteopathic medical school graduates, this bill would help ensure that additional GME residency slots are made available to pursue their post-graduate training and become licensed practicing physicians. Improving access to care in rural and underserved areas is an important goal of osteopathic medical education. In fact, AACOM data show that 50 percent of incoming 2019-

2020 osteopathic medical students planned to practice in a medically underserved or health shortage areas; of those, 46 percent planned to practice in a rural community.¹

On behalf of AACOM, I offer our support for this legislation and thank you for your steadfast leadership to support a health care system that will enable current osteopathic medical students and future physicians to provide health care to the patients they serve.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Cain, DO". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light gray rectangular box.

Robert A. Cain, DO, FACOI, FAODME
President and CEO

¹ https://www.aacom.org/docs/default-source/data-and-trends/aacom-2019-2020-academic-year-entering-student-survey-summary-report.pdf?sfvrsn=f2380f97_4