

July 27, 2022

The Honorable Tom O'Halleran  
U.S. House of Representatives  
318 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana Harshbarger  
U.S. House of Representatives  
167 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives O'Halleran and Harshbarger:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I offer strong support for the *Rural Physician Workforce Production Act* (H.R. 8508). As educators of future physicians, we support policies which aim to provide a solution to the physician workforce shortage, especially in rural areas.

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 38 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) — **educating nearly 34,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students** — at 60 teaching locations in 34 states, as well as osteopathic graduate medical education professionals and trainees at U.S. medical centers, hospitals, clinics and health systems.

This bipartisan legislation is critical to increasing the physician workforce in rural areas by lifting residency caps that disadvantage rural hospitals in recruiting residents. Physician distribution is influenced by training, and most practice within 100 miles of their residency program. Osteopathic physicians (DOs) play a critical role in addressing the physician workforce shortage, and COMs consistently achieve top rankings in primary care and rural and underserved practice categories. In fact, 41 percent of graduating 2020-2021 osteopathic medical students plan to practice in a medically underserved or health shortage area; of those, 49 percent plan to practice in a rural community. Moreover, more than 73 percent of DOs practice in the state where they do residency training.

Thank you for your commitment to the future physician workforce. AACOM looks forward to working with you to advance H.R. 8508. For questions or additional information, please contact me at [dbergman@aacom.org](mailto:dbergman@aacom.org).

Sincerely,



David Bergman, JD  
Vice President of Government Relations