

March 15, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leaders Schumer, McConnell, and Jeffries:

We are writing to request that you agree to include in the upcoming multi-bill appropriations legislation the multi-year reauthorization of the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program that we understand has been agreed to by leaders of the HELP and Energy and Commerce committees. We are very grateful for the support of Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, Chair McMorris Rodgers, and Ranking Member Pallone, without whom this historic extension would not have occurred.

Nearly six months after the last multi-year reauthorization expired, the new proposed five-year reauthorization and increased funding levels will help avoid further disruption to the Teaching Health Centers (THCs) and their residents and patients. As you know, this program solves gaps in access to high-quality primary, mental, and dental health care by supporting the development of the next generation of physicians and dentists to serve in both urban and rural underserved communities. THCs have trained thousands of medical and dental residents and THCGME is the only federal program training physicians in a community setting rather than a hospital setting. For the current 2023-2024 academic year, there are 81 THCs in 23 states with 1,096 medical residents handling more than an estimated one million patient visits annually in rural and urban medically underserved communities. 82% of THC graduates remain in primary care practice, compared to 23% of traditional residency graduates; and 20% of THC graduates practice in rural America, compared to eight percent of traditional residency graduates.

In addition, 90 organizations received HHS THC Planning and Development grants and have developed proposals to start new medical and dental residency programs under the THCGME program, including seven in New York, three in Louisiana, and two in Kentucky. Without Congress' support, many of these Planning and Development grantees will have to cancel their plans for training new physicians and dentists to serve their communities, losing significant investment.

We look forward to working with you on reauthorization of this important program.

Sincerely,

American Association of Teaching Health Centers
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Osteopathic Association
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

Society of General Internal Medicine
Council of Academic Family Medicine