



Support the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Program

The Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program, administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration, provides funding for primary care medical and dental residency training in community-based settings. For the current 2020 – 2021 academic year, the program supports the training of 769 residents in 60 primary care residency programs across 25 states. Since 2011, the program has supported the training of over 1,148 new primary care physicians and dentists that have graduated and entered the workforce. **Importantly, physicians trained in teaching health center (THC) programs are more likely to practice in rural and underserved communities, increasing access to care for the country’s most vulnerable patient populations.**

Congress recognized the critical impact and continued success of the THCGME Program, which maintains bipartisan support, by providing the program with short-term funding extensions through a series of spending measures, including the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act* (P.L.116-136) and *Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act of 2020* (P.L.116-159), which extended the program’s funding through December 11. However, increased, stable funding is vital for this program to continue to train physicians who work in communities of need.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, THCs faced budgeting, planning, and recruitment challenges due to the pattern of short-term funding extensions over the past decade. THCs continue to face uncertain federal funding, compounded by significant financial losses caused by COVID-19 that threaten their stability and ability to train the next generation of physicians. Long-term increased THCGME funding will ensure that residents across the country’s THCs can continue training and providing the life-saving work of screening and testing patients at community healthcare clinics for COVID-19, adapting telehealth for high-risk individuals with chronic diseases, and supporting the nation’s pandemic recovery efforts and beyond. **AACOM urges Congress to reauthorize and expand funding to sustain the THCGME Program long-term.**

AACOM supports the following legislation in the 116th Congress:

AACOM strongly supports S. 1191/H.R. 2815, the *Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2019*.

Introduced by U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Jon Tester (D-MT), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Doug Jones (D-AL), John Boozman (R-AR), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Steve Daines (R-MT), and Kamala

Harris (D-CA), and U.S. Representatives Raul Ruiz (D-CA), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM), and Phil Roe (R-TN), this bill would reauthorize the THCGME Program for five years and provide enhanced funding and a pathway for growth in the number of residents trained.

AACOM also thanks the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) for introducing S.192, the *Community and Public Health Programs Extension Act*.

This bill extends five years of mandatory funding for the THCGME Program, among other federal health programs. With the leadership and support of Senators Alexander and Murray, the HELP Committee passed S. 1895, the *Lower Health Care Costs Act of 2019*, a bipartisan package that includes a provision similar to S. 192.

For more information, please contact Judith Mun, Director of Government Relations, at jmun@aacom.org or (202) 844-4221.