



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 15, 2017

The Honorable Bill Nelson
U.S. Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dean Heller
U.S. Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson, Minority Leader Schumer, and Senator Heller:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I offer strong support for S. 1301, the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017*. Thank you for your leadership in reintroducing this vital 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 represents the 33 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States. These colleges are accredited to deliver instruction at 48 teaching locations in 31 states. In the 2016-2017 academic year, these colleges educated over 27,000 future physicians – more than 20 percent of U.S. medical students.

AACOM lauds your efforts in working to address this crisis in our nation's health care system. As educators of future physicians, we strongly support policies, including the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017*, which aim to provide a cost-effective solution to the physician workforce shortage. This legislation is timely and momentous, as it would give priority to hospitals in states with new medical schools and emphasize training in community-based settings. The bill's additional requirement for the Comptroller General of the United States to submit a report to identify ways to improve inclusion of underrepresented individuals in the physician workforce, such as those from rural or lower-income communities, will encourage greater connections and services between traditionally-underserved communities and the emerging physician workforce.

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The *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017* is critical to ensure that additional GME residency slots are made available to new medical school graduates to pursue their post-graduate training and become licensed practicing physicians. Moreover, in response to the current and increasing physician workforce shortage, the number of osteopathic medical school graduates is growing and is expected to continue to rise. This legislation will result in expanded access to patient care and is of high importance to many rural and underserved areas, which already face shortages of primary care providers.

On behalf of AACOM, I offer our strong support for the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017*, and I thank you for your steadfast leadership and dedication to supporting a health care system that will enable current osteopathic medical students and future physicians to provide high quality care to the patients they serve.

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