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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
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**CAFM**  
COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC FAMILY MEDICINE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, August 3, 2017

**Physicians, Medical Educators, Community Health Centers  
Strongly Support *Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act***

Our organizations applaud the introduction of the “*Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2017*” and urge the Senate to quickly pass this important legislation. This is the Senate companion to the bipartisan House bill of the same name. We thank Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jon Tester (D-MT) for their leadership and commitment to ensuring that our nation has a strong and robust primary care workforce.

The Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program, established in 2010 and reauthorized in 2015, has been, by any measure, an overwhelming success. During its first seven years, the THCGME program trained more than 740 primary care physicians in 59 centers in 27 states. Importantly, physicians trained in teaching health center programs are more likely to practice in underserved communities, increasing access to care for the country’s most vulnerable patient populations.

The value of primary care is well documented. In fact, individuals who have a continuous relationship with a primary care physician are more likely to be healthier and use fewer health care resources. It is also well documented that our nation faces a primary care physician workforce shortage. The THCGME program has proven its ability to increase the number of primary care physicians trained in an efficient manner.

This highly successful and impactful program is set to expire on September 30, 2017, unless Congress takes affirmative action to reauthorize and fund the THCGME program. The legislation introduced today

not only reauthorizes the program, but also provides enhanced funding and a pathway for growth in the number of residents trained. Most of all, the legislation will help build the primary care physician pipeline necessary to reduce costs, improve patient care, and support underserved rural and urban communities.

We are particularly gratified that members of both parties are working together to extend this vital program that brings health care to medically underserved communities across America. Our organizations strongly support this legislation and call on the House of Representatives and Senate to ensure that the THCGME program is reauthorized and appropriately financed by September 30.

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