



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

July 13, 2012

The Honorable Jack Reed  
U.S. Senate  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Kyl  
U.S. Senate  
730 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reed and Kyl:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), which represents the nation's colleges of osteopathic medicine and their osteopathic physicians in training, I offer support for the Graduate Medical Education Reform Act of 2012. Thank you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation, which AACOM believes is a positive step to ensure graduate medical education (GME) can meet the nation's growing health care demands.

AACOM represents the administrations, faculty, and students of the nation's osteopathic colleges which offer the doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) degree. There are 29 colleges of osteopathic medicine at 37 locations in 28 states. Currently more than 20,000 medical students—1 in 5 students at a U.S. medical school—are studying at an osteopathic medical school.

As educators of future osteopathic physicians, we support policies, including the Graduate Medical Education Reform Act of 2012, which takes a positive step towards ensuring an adequately trained physician workforce that meets the needs of patients. This is particularly important now that the number of osteopathic medical school graduates is growing and is projected to grow in response to existing and projected physician workforce shortages. Large numbers of osteopathic medical graduates pursue careers in primary care and practice in rural and underserved areas where the primary care shortages are most acute.

While AACOM supports transparency and accountability measures to ensure that federal funding supports training and high quality outcomes, we strongly believe that this approach must be coupled with the expansion of Medicare-funded medical residency slots. Without this comprehensive approach to reform, fewer future physicians will be trained and fewer patients will have access to care, exacerbating the physician workforce shortage our nation is currently facing.

On behalf of AACOM, I offer our support for the Graduate Medical Education Reform Act of 2012, and I thank you for your commitment and leadership to support comprehensive reform of the nation's GME system, which will strengthen the physician workforce and enhance patient care.

Respectfully,

Stephen C. Shannon, DO, MPH  
President and CEO

5550 Friendship Boulevard  
Suite 310  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815-7231  
P 301.968.4142  
F 301.968.4101  
[www.aacom.org](http://www.aacom.org)