



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

May 20, 2019

The Honorable Raul Ruiz
U.S. House of Representatives
2342 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
U.S. House of Representatives
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Xochitl Torres Small
U.S. House of Representatives
430 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Phil Roe, MD
U.S. House of Representatives
102 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Ruiz, McMorris Rodgers, Torres Small, and Roe:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), thank you for your unwavering bipartisan commitment and leadership in championing the Health Resources and Services Administration's Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program by introducing H.R. 2815, the *Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2019*. We offer our strong support of this legislation.

AACOM leads and advocates for the full continuum of osteopathic medical education to improve the health of the public. Founded in 1898 to support and assist the nation's osteopathic medical schools, AACOM represents all 35 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine—educating nearly 31,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all U.S. medical students—at 55 teaching locations in 32 U.S. states, as well as osteopathic graduate medical education professionals and trainees at U.S. medical centers, hospitals, clinics, and health systems.

With your introduction of H.R. 2815, the osteopathic medical education community commends your bipartisan efforts to support this critical program that produces primary care physicians in medically underserved communities across our country by reauthorizing it for five years and providing enhanced funding and a pathway for growth in the number of residents trained.

Established in 2010 and reauthorized in 2015 and 2018, the THCGME Program has been a notable success. In the current 2018 – 2019 academic year, the program supports the training of 728 residents in 56 primary care residency programs, across 23 states. Since 2011, the program has supported the training of over 880 new primary care physicians and dentists that have graduated and entered the workforce. Importantly, physicians trained in THC programs are more likely to practice in underserved communities, increasing access to care for the country's most vulnerable patient populations.

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As you know, the continuation of this program is vital to addressing primary care physician workforce shortages and delivering health care services to vulnerable patients in need. It has encouraged greater connections and services between traditionally underserved areas and the emerging physician workforce by creating opportunities for medical students to carry out their required training where their services are most needed. The THCGME Program has been highly effective in transitioning residents into high-need communities, with more than 60 percent of physicians and dentists currently practicing in a primary care setting and approximately 58 percent currently in a medically underserved area.

On behalf of the nation's osteopathic medical education community, thank you for your steadfast leadership, and I look forward to continuing our work together to support a health care system that will enable osteopathic medical students and future physicians to provide primary health care to the patients they serve. We look forward to working together on this important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Shannon", is written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Stephen C. Shannon, DO, MPH
President and CEO