



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

January 28, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), thank you for your bipartisan commitment and leadership in supporting the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program by introducing the *Community and Public Health Programs Extension Act*.

AACOM represents the 35 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States. These colleges are accredited to deliver instruction at 55 teaching locations in 32 states. In the current academic year, these colleges are educating more than 30,000 future physicians—25 percent of all U.S. medical students. Six of the colleges are public and 29 are private institutions. AACOM was founded in 1898 to support and assist the nation's osteopathic medical schools, and to serve as a unifying voice for osteopathic medical education. The association leads and advocates for the osteopathic medical education community to improve the health of the public.

We commend your leadership in supporting the THCGME and National Health Service Corps Programs, which are vital to addressing primary care physician workforce shortages and delivering health care services to vulnerable patients in need. The THCGME Program 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. As you know, the program has been highly effective in transitioning residents into medically underserved areas, with more than 80 percent remaining in primary care practice and over half remaining in high-need communities.

On behalf of the osteopathic medical education community, thank you for your steadfast leadership in introducing the *Community and Public Health Programs Extension Act*. I look

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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 in geographic areas where patient access issues are most acute.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Shannon", is positioned above the typed name. 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