

September 1, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richie Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Wyden and Neal, and Ranking Members Crapo and Brady:

On behalf of the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Advocacy Coalition, the undersigned groups urge you to build upon last year's historic investment in the health care workforce, and in particular GME, as you consider the upcoming budget reconciliation legislation. Physicians are a vital component of our nation's health care infrastructure, and as we have seen throughout the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, investments to increase the number of physicians are sorely needed. **Our groups urge you to include policies that would increase Medicare support for GME in the budget reconciliation legislation.**

The United States is facing a shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034, which is almost certain to be exacerbated by an aging physician population, rising rates of physician burnout, and early retirement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Access issues persist for patients in both rural and urban underserved communities, and in both primary and specialty care. In order to meet the needs of our diverse and growing nation, ensure patient access to care, improve provider diversity and health equity, and prepare for the next public health crisis, it is clear that we must invest in physician training.

Congress made a critical initial investment in the physician workforce by providing 1,000 new Medicare-supported GME positions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 – the first increase of its kind in nearly twenty-five years. However, more is needed to substantially increase the number of physicians. Our groups urge you to take this opportunity to further invest in the physician workforce by again increasing the number of Medicare-support GME positions.

The Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021 (S. 834/H.R. 2256) is bipartisan legislation that would take steps to alleviate the physician shortage by gradually providing 14,000 new Medicare-supported GME positions. Much like the 2020 year-end package, these positions would be targeted to hospitals with diverse needs, including rural teaching hospitals, hospitals already training over their Medicare caps, hospitals in states with new medical schools or branch campuses, and hospitals serving patients in health professional shortage areas. The

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legislation would also take steps to help improve physician workforce diversity by commissioning a report to specifically look at ways to create a more diverse clinical workforce.

As providers continue to serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial that we invest in future physicians who can replenish the physician workforce. We urge you to include additional Medicare-supported GME training positions in the upcoming reconciliation package, and we look forward to working with you to expand and diversify the physician workforce and ensure that patients have access to the care they need.

Sincerely,

Association of American Medical Colleges

Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health

Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM)

Alliance of Specialty Medicine

America's Essential Hospitals

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

American Academy of Dermatology Association

American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Ophthalmology

American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

American Academy of Sleep Medicine

American Association of Chairs of Departments of Psychiatry

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training

American Association of Neurological Surgeons

American College of Academic Addiction Medicine (ACAAM)

American College of Cardiology

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Osteopathic Internists

American College of Physicians

American College of Radiology

American College of Rheumatology

American College of Surgeons

American Gastroenterological Association

American Geriatrics Society

American Gynecological & Obstetrical Society (AGOS)

American Medical Association

American Osteopathic Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Society for Clinical Pathology

American Society of Addiction Medicine

American Society of Nephrology

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American Society of Plastic Surgeons

American Surgical Association

American Urological Association

AMGA

Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers

Association of Academic Health Centers (AAHC)

Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries

Association of Academic Psychiatrists

Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs

Association of University Professors of Neurology

Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology (AUPO)

Association of University Radiologists

California Hospital Association

Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations

College of American Pathologists

Congress of Neurological Surgeons

Greater New York Hospital Association

Healthcare Association of New York State

Heart Failure Society of America

Illinois Health and Hospital Association

Medical Group Management Association

National Association For Behavioral Healthcare

National Association of Spine Specialists

Society for Academic Emergency Medicine

Society of Academic Associations of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine

Society of Directors of Research in Medical Education

Society of General Internal Medicine

Society of Interventional Radiology

Society of Neurological Surgeons

The American Society of Breast Surgeons

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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