

December 4, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Leader Reid, and Leader McConnell:

We are writing to express our strong support for funding of the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program, providing at minimum \$63,700,000 for fiscal year (FY) 2015 to avert endangering the stability and existence of the program. This funding will allow for the completion of training for the expected 758 residents in academic year 2015-2016. Our organizations collectively stand in strong support of addressing this immediate need.

The THCGME Program provides primary care medical and dental training opportunities in community-based settings. THC Programs are mandated to meet strict accountability requirements in which every federal dollar is used exclusively for primary care training, all in community-based settings. Funding currently available in FY 2015 will not maintain the 758 residents at their full per resident amount (PRA) of \$150,000.

According to HRSA, primary care residents trained in community-based settings are *three times more likely* than traditionally-trained residents to practice primary care in a community-based setting.

The THCGME Program is a vital source of training for primary care medical and dental residencies to expand access to care in underserved communities across the country. Operating in 24 states, 60 Teaching Health Centers in underserved areas are currently training 556 resident physicians and dentists, and are providing health care to thousands of patients annually.

The programs are training residents in accredited graduate medical education programs including family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine-pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, general dentistry, pediatric dentistry, and geriatrics.

We believe this approach is an important first step to ensure funding is available for the remainder of FY 2015 while also maintaining the necessary PRA of \$150,000. In order to keep this successful program at full capacity, we urgently request your support for additional THCGME Program funding of at minimum \$63,700,000 for this fiscal year.

Early next year, we will look to the Congress to reauthorize and fully fund the THCGME Program to provide an opportunity to directly confront the nation's primary care workforce shortage while providing medical and dental health care services to underserved communities across the country in highest need areas.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this critical program. Our organizations look forward to working with you to ensure the long term stability, sustainability, and growth of the THCGME Program -- we believe there is a solution.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Teaching Health Centers
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Association
American Osteopathic Association
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Rural Health Association
North American Primary Care Research Group
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine

C: Chairman Dave Camp, Committee on Ways and Means
Ranking Member Sander Levin, Committee on Ways and Means
Chairman Fred Upton, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Ranking Member Henry Waxman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Chairman Ron Wyden, Committee on Finance
Ranking Member Orrin Hatch, Committee on Finance
Chairman Tom Harkin, Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Ranking Member Lamar Alexander, Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions