



February 4, 2019

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
United States Senate  
345 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gardner:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 131,400 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to express the AAFP's support for the *Rural Physician Workforce Production Act of 2019* (S. 289). The bill would provide invaluable new federal support for rural residency training, which will help alleviate physician shortages in rural communities.

The nationwide shortage and maldistribution of family physicians and other primary care physicians is particularly dire in rural communities. Although evidence indicates that one of the most promising ways to recruit physicians to practice in rural areas is through rural experiences during their residency training, numerous incentives in the Medicare program discourage hospitals from providing such opportunities—including in communities that desperately need new physicians.

Your bill would provide new robust financial incentives for rural hospitals (including critical access hospitals) to provide the training opportunities that the communities they serve need. These financial incentives would extend to urban hospitals as well, for the specific purpose of growing the number of residents they train in “rural training tracks.”

The *Rural Physician Workforce Production Act* represents a promising way to make progress on our national physician workforce problem, and we applaud you for your leadership. If you have any additional questions about the AAFP's views, please have your staff contact Teresa Baker, Senior Government Relations Representative, at [tbaker@aafp.org](mailto:tbaker@aafp.org) or 202-655-4907.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Munger, MD, FAAFP  
Board Chair

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**About Family Medicine**

Family physicians conduct approximately one in five of the total medical office visits in the United States per year—more than any other specialty. Family physicians provide comprehensive, evidence-based, and cost-effective care dedicated to improving the health of patients, families, and communities. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing and personal patient-physician relationship where the family physician serves as the hub of each patient's integrated care team. More Americans depend on family physicians than on any other medical specialty.