

June 23, 2009

Dear Senator:

Today we write you on behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians and American Osteopathic Association, American Medical Student Association, Doctors for America and the National Physicians Association. Our organizations represent nearly 400,000 physicians and medical students and we want Congress, the Administration, and the American people to know that the nation's primary care physicians are in ***strong support of health care reform.***

We see the health care system up close and know that we must make sure that all of the people in our communities have access to needed services, that people have real choices of plans and doctors, and that health care is affordable for ***all*** the people in the country.

If done right, health care reform will help physicians provide better care for patients throughout the country. Yet as we are on the brink of greatly expanding access to care for more people, the US is facing a shortage of primary care physicians. As a critical part of health reform, we urge that the Congress and the Administration take the following steps to help ensure that we have enough primary care physicians to care for our people:

- invest in training more primary care doctors
- implement new payment models to support patient-centered primary care
- reform and enhance Medicare payment to recruit more physicians into primary care and support those already in practice

We are encouraged by-- and appreciative-- that draft legislation prepared by the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction includes policies, consistent with the above, which are intended to ensure a sufficient number of primary care physicians. We will continue to analyze and provide input on such policies from the standpoint of whether they will, in combination, have the impact needed to reverse the precipitous decline in the numbers of primary care physicians.

Continuation of the current physician training system and flawed physician payment system is a steep pathway to *decreased access to* and *growing cost of* health care for all Americans. We must take advantage of this historic opportunity for change and enact meaningful comprehensive health care reform.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians  
American College of Physicians  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Medical Student Association  
Doctors for America  
National Physicians Association