



July 7, 2021

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2188 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Rush,

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 133,500 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to express the AAFP's support for the Creation of Opportunities for Medical Manpower in Underserved Neighborhoods by Indemnifying Tuition and Incentivizing Exceptional Service (COMMUNITIES) Act (H.R. 4285).

The bill would institute 100% loan repayment under the National Health Service Corps' (NHSC) Loan Repayment Program if a primary care clinician commits to serving in an eligible underserved community for five years.

Currently, loan repayments under NHSC, \$50,000 for two years and up to \$100,000 for five years in some cases, do not cover the full cost of medical school, where average debt for graduating students is between \$200,000 and \$250,000. Research has shown that loan forgiveness or repayment programs directly influence physician practice choice. Additionally, there is a projected shortage of up to 48,000 primary care physicians by 2034.

The COMMUNITIES Act will help strengthen the primary care physician pipeline, increase access to health care to communities in most need, address medical school debt burdens, and helps ensure wider access to medical education opportunities.

The AAFP applauds the introduction of the COMMUNITIES Act and we look forward to working with you to move this legislation forward. For more information, please contact John Aguilar, Manager of Legislative Affairs, at [jaguilar@aafp.org](mailto:jaguilar@aafp.org).

Sincerely,

Gary L. LeRoy, MD, FAAFP  
Board Chair  
American Academy of Family Physicians

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