



July 26, 2017

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rogers
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Niki Tsongas
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives McMorris Rodgers and Tsongas:

On behalf of the 129,000 members of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I write to support the *Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2017* (H.R. 3394). Thank you for your commitment to this important, innovative program.

H.R. 3394 reauthorizes the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program for three years. Currently administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the THCGME program provides funding to increase the number of primary care medical and dental residents training in community-based and outpatient settings where most health care in the U.S. is provided. The fundamental goal of the THCGME program is to increase access to well-trained primary care clinicians. There are approximately 740 residents being trained in 59 HRSA-supported teaching health center (THC) residencies in 27 states and the District of Columbia. THCGME programs are located in federally qualified health centers, community mental health centers, rural health clinics, and other community settings.

The AAFP is pleased to support the *Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2017* because it provides adequate and sustainable annual funding of \$116.5 million for the existing residency slots and supports program expansion into rural and underserved communities. These critical resources will address funding shortfalls that threaten the program's viability. In addition, the legislation maintains the program's strong transparency and accountability requirements. The THCGME program directly addresses three major concerns regarding physician production: the serious shortage of primary care physicians, geographic maldistribution, and the growing need for physicians who serve underserved populations. Recognizing the importance of supplying well-trained primary care physicians to communities that need them most, we look forward to working with you to keep the THCGME program authorized and fully funded.

Again, we are pleased to support this legislation. For more information, please contact Sonya Clay, Government Relations Representative, at 202-232-9033 or sclay@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Wanda D. Filer, MD, M.B.A, FAAFP
Board Chair

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