

August 8, 2013

Bahar Niakan
Director, Division of Policy and Information Coordination
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
Department of Health and Human Services
Room 10–29, Parklawn Building
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: Evaluation and Initial Assessment of HRSA Teaching Health Centers

Dear Director Niakan:

On behalf of the Council of Academic Family Medicine (CAFM), including the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, Association of Departments of Family Medicine, Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors, the North American Primary Care Research Group, along with the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), we are pleased to submit comments on the Health Resources and Services Administration [notice](#) titled Evaluation and Initial Assessment of HRSA Teaching Health Centers as published in the June 12, 2013 *Federal Register*.

Our organizations continue to support provisions of the *Affordable Care Act* that establish the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program, which is designed to establish and expand primary care residency training programs in community-based settings. The primary goals of this program are to increase the production of primary care doctors who are well prepared to practice in community settings, particularly with underserved populations, and to improve the overall number and geographic distribution of primary care providers.

The evaluation of this program is critical to understanding the significance of the teaching health center (THC) model. This feedback will be useful for a wide range of stakeholders and funders. We believe HRSA will need several years of data to completely understand the benefits of the program; thus, we urge the agency to continue these evaluations annually. We reviewed the proposed survey instruments and find them reasonable and not burdensome.

On behalf of the family medicine organizations, we appreciate the opportunity to respond to the notice. We appreciate the agency's efforts to develop regulations in keeping with the *Affordable Care Act* and are supportive of the development of data regarding the utility of the Teaching Health Center program. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact Hope R. Wittenberg, CAFM Director of Government Relations, at hwittenberg@stfm.org

or 202-986-3309, or Robert Bennett, AAFP Federal Regulatory Manager, at rbennett@aafp.org or 202-232-9033.

Sincerely,



John Saultz, MD MSPH
President
Society of Teachers of Family
Medicine



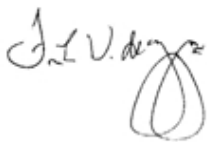
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