



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

November 19, 2014

Mary Wakefield, RN, PhD
Administrator
Health Resources and Services Administration
Department of Health and Human Services
Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Director Wakefield:

On behalf of American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I am writing to express our regret that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will reduce the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program payment for each Eligible Resident/Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) to \$70,000 from \$150,000 for Academic Year 2015-2016. We recognize the fiscal constraint imposed on this important program and appreciate your effort to extend the program within those limits. However, we are compelled to inform you of our serious concerns about the impact of this announcement on the THCGME program.

The drastic cut to the per-resident amount will hinder the ability of these Teaching Health Centers to offer training of family medicine residents in non-hospital settings where most primary care is delivered. Further, the cut threatens our ability to secure an adequately funded reauthorization by supporting the fiction that a Teaching Health Center can cover the expenses associated training residents at such a reduced rate.

The THCGME program is a wise federal investment that has helped to increase the number of family medicine residents trained in community-based settings. Although we feel the announced THCGME payment cut undermines our shared goal and ongoing efforts to improve health care access, we hope to work with the White House, Congress and you to restore the THCGME program to support community-based primary care residency training. Please contact Teresa Baker, Senior Government Relations Representative, at 202-232-9033 or tbaker@aafp.org with any comments or questions.

Sincerely,

Reid B. Blackwelder, MD, FAFPP
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