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September 11, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I want to express our support for S.1754, the “Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2017,” which would reauthorize the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program for an additional three years and supports program expansion to serve more rural and underserved communities.

Since its enactment in 2010, the THCGME program has helped increase the number of primary care medical and dental residents training in rural and underserved communities. In the current academic year alone, the THCGME program supports 732 residents in 57 primary care residency programs, across 24 states. These centers are located predominantly in Federally Qualified Health Centers, rural health clinics, and tribal health centers, which prioritize care for underserved and vulnerable populations. Reports have shown that residents who train at teaching health centers are also more likely to practice primary care and remain in underserved or rural communities, improving patient access to care.

This legislation will ensure that the THCGME program can continue in the future and provides additional funding to direct more resources to the communities that need it the most. The bill also maintains the program’s strong transparency and accountability requirements that guarantee the success of the program. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD