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June 16, 2017

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our support for S. 1301, the “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017,” which would provide 15,000 additional Medicare-supported graduate medical education (GME) positions over five years.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 capped the number of residents and fellows that are funded by Medicare. Consequently, GME programs have experienced minimum growth and have not expanded to meet the demands of an aging and growing patient population. Workforce experts predict that the U.S. will face a significant physician shortage for both primary care and specialty physicians over the next 10 years if training positions are not expanded. Yet, while new medical schools are opening and existing medical schools are increasing their enrollments to meet the need for more physicians, federal support for residency positions is still subject to this outdated cap.

The “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017” ameliorates this problem by providing critical federal funding to expand GME training positions. This legislation would also ensure patient access to care by securing necessary resources to encourage the offering of physician training programs. We appreciate your efforts to expand GME funding 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, stylized initial "J".

James L. Madara, MD