

February 27, 2019

The Honorable John Boozman
United States Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

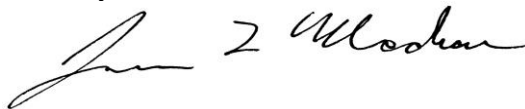
Dear Senator Boozman:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our support for S. 348, the “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2019,” which seeks to address the growing physician shortage and strengthen the nation’s health care system by providing 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. Completion of residency training offered by GME programs is a fundamental component of medical education, critical for U.S. physicians to become board certified professionals, and to practice independently. 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.¹ 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enrollments to meet the need for more physicians, federal support for residency positions are still subject to this outdated cap. In addition, during the 2018 “Match,” the process by which medical school graduates apply for first-year post-graduate (PGY-1) positions in GME programs across the country, there existed a surplus of approximately 7,000 applicants compared to slots available.² The “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2019” ameliorates this problem by providing critical federal funding to expand GME training positions. We also applaud efforts to improve the number of health professionals from rural, lower income, and underrepresented communities through required reporting and study by the Government Accountability Office.

This legislation is both timely and necessary to broader discussions surrounding accessible and quality health care in the U.S. We appreciate your efforts to expand GME funding and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

¹ https://aame-black.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/d9/99/d999063e-75eb-468e-90a5-f68c4d2c95a8/dgme_-_the_resident_physician_shortage_reduction_act_of_2019_section-by-section_-_20190206.pdf

² <https://mk0nrmpcikgb8jxyd19h.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Main-Match-Result-and-Data-2018.pdf>