



**JAMES L. MADARA, MD**  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

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July 2, 2019

The Honorable Tom McCaffery  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
for Health Affairs  
Defense Health Headquarters  
7700 Arlington Boulevard  
Falls Church, VA 22042

Navy Vice Admiral Raquel C. Bono  
Director, Defense Health Agency (DHA)  
Defense Health Headquarters  
7700 Arlington Boulevard  
Falls Church, VA 22042

Dear Assistant Secretary McCaffery and Vice Admiral Bono:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to urge the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to release any assessments or pertinent information used by the DOD to propose any reductions in the overall uniformed medical positions, including but not limited to the number of medical provider billet cuts and their distribution amongst specialties and services.

Vice Admiral Bono stated in her April 3, 2019, testimony to the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense that:

As part of the reforms directed by the FY 2017 and 2019 National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAAs), the Department has undertaken several initiatives regarding our military medical personnel. First, the Military Departments, the Joint Staff, and organizations within the Office of the Secretary of Defense conducted the required assessment of the operational medical requirements needed to support the National Defense Strategy. As a result of this assessment, the Military Departments plan to reduce overall uniformed medical positions.<sup>1</sup>

To our knowledge, details have not been made public regarding the depth, span, and impact of the proposed billet cuts to military medical care teams, including uniformed physicians and other medical-branched service members. We are deeply concerned that any cuts by the DOD to military health care provider billets could jeopardize the success and impact of health care services for millions of servicemembers and beneficiaries.

Furthermore, any decrease in associated military graduate medical education (GME) positions would likely displace available GME positions in civilian programs and further exacerbate physician shortages. The quality and availability of GME opportunities could have a direct impact on the number of physicians the DOD can recruit, train, and retain to support the operational mission of the military services.<sup>2</sup> As a result, we would oppose any reductions to military GME residency or fellowship positions without

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/04.03.19--Bono%20Testimony.pdf> (page 8)

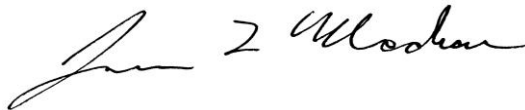
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/04.03.19--West%20Testimony.pdf> (page 7)

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dedicated Congressional funding for an equal number of civilian residency positions in addition to any other planned increases to civilian GME to avoid further exacerbating the U.S. physician shortage.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Margaret Garikes, Vice President of Federal Affairs, at [margaret.garikes@ama-assn.org](mailto:margaret.garikes@ama-assn.org) or 202-789-7409.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD