

April 7, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
U.S. House of Representatives
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support the Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act

Dear Representative Maloney:

On behalf of our physician and medical student members, the American Medical Association (AMA) is writing to voice our strong support for the “Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act,” and to urge the U.S. House of Representatives to pass this legislation. Physicians, residents, medical students, and other health care professionals are playing a critical role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and putting their health on the line caring for the sickest patients. As such, due to their selfless actions in the face of a national emergency, physicians, residents, medical students, and other health care professions who perform work to combat, control, and recover from COVID-19 should be provided with meaningful relief in the form of student loan forgiveness.

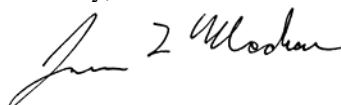
Student loans remain a major burden for medical students, with 76 percent of students graduating with a median debt of \$200,000. The AMA has long-standing concerns about the high and growing costs of medical education, which remains the most expensive post-secondary educational program in the United States. In the weeks, months, and years that follow this pandemic, as our medical community works tirelessly to help our nation heal, those physicians who risked their lives during this time should be able to focus on providing the best medical care possible, rather than worrying about the burden of the student loans that helped create the foundation for their ability to care for our nation.

Moreover, providing student loan forgiveness for medical professionals during this time will have positive long-term effects. Currently, debt incurred by pursuing medical training serves as a barrier to addressing access challenges. Without the burden of student loans, more health care professionals will be willing and have the financial freedom to work in rural or underserved areas to provide much needed medical care to the communities hit hardest by COVID-19 in the coming years.

As physicians, residents, and medical students are redeployed from their primary training programs, graduate early to join the frontlines, research vigilantly for a cure, and care for ailing patients, the last worry they should have is paying off their student loans. This vital legislation will help to sustain the current workforce during the pandemic and help maintain a robust pipeline of physicians and other allied health providers for future health emergencies. As such, the AMA urges the U.S. House of Representatives to pass the “Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act,” thereby providing a measure of relief for our physicians and health care workers who are leading the fight in the battle against COVID-19.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD