



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

May 15, 2009

Letter also sent to Representatives Sarbanes and Connolly

The Honorable Michael E. McMahon
U.S. House of Representatives
323 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McMahon:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our strong support for H.R. 2332, the "Future Physicians Serving America Act of 2009," which would provide up to 100 percent tuition assistance for each year of service with a maximum of two years to graduates of the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps programs who attend medical school within the United States.

As we move forward with health system reform, we must address the physician workforce shortage. Several reports have been released that point to a shortage in the future physician workforce. A 2005 Council on Graduate Medical Education (COGME) report projected a shortage of 85,000 physicians by 2020 and recommended a 15 percent increase in enrollment in U.S. medical schools. High medical student debt, averaging \$155,000 for 88 percent of U.S. medical school graduates, is a significant hardship throughout the loan repayment period. Borrowers with high loan debts are often deterred from entering public health service, practicing medicine in underserved areas, starting a career in medical education or research, or practicing primary care medicine. A high debt burden has also been cited as the number one deterrent among minority students for not applying to medical school. H.R. 2332 would offer medical students options to reduce huge debt burdens, which is an important step to addressing physician shortages and ensuring access to health care.

The Future Physicians Serving America Act will encourage highly qualified individuals to lower their debt burden by serving their country and future physicians will gain invaluable experience by working to help those in need in the U.S. or abroad.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA