



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

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May 21, 2009

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
United States Senate  
716 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joseph Crowley  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2404 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Nelson and Congressman Crowley:

On behalf of the 74 undersigned osteopathic state and specialty associations and the 64,000 osteopathic physicians we represent, we are pleased to inform you of our strong support for the “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2009” (S. 973/H.R. 2251). We applaud your leadership on this important issue and are committed to assisting you in securing enactment of this legislation.

Since 1997 our nation’s physician training capacity has been static. In 1997 the Balanced Budget Act froze the number of residents that a hospital could claim Medicare payment for, based on the number of residents that each hospital trained in 1996. However, over the past 10 years our population has increased and aged. As our nation seeks to increase access to health care coverage, it is imperative that we take appropriate steps to ensure that our nation’s physician workforce is capable of meeting increased demand.

Experts have reached consensus that the United States will face a shortfall in its physician supply over the next twenty years. While academic and policy experts debate the best approaches to sustain the physician workforce in the long term, the AOA recognizes that we must begin to educate and train a larger cadre of physicians now. We believe your legislation would lead to an appropriate expansion of residency training capacity, thus enhancing the nation’s ability to meet future physician workforce needs.

The AOA is pleased that your legislation places an emphasis on increasing the number of training programs in primary care specialties and general surgery. While increasing the overall supply of physicians is important, we share your desire to see a rapid growth in the number of physicians in these underrepresented specialties. Recent statistics associated with career choices of medical school graduates demonstrates the acute need to increase our nation’s supply of family physicians, general internists, pediatricians, and general surgeons.

Additionally, we are very supportive of your efforts to increase training capacity in states and geographic regions that face the greatest need. The current colleges of osteopathic medicine, and those set to open in the future, are located in regions that historically have had limited access to

physician services. The location of current and future colleges of osteopathic medicine reflects the osteopathic profession's commitment to rural and underserved communities.

Today, one in five medical students in the United States is enrolled in a college of osteopathic medicine. Currently, there are 25 colleges of osteopathic medicine operating on 28 campuses. In 2009, these colleges will graduate approximately 3,500 new osteopathic physicians. By 2013 the number of osteopathic physicians graduating from colleges of osteopathic medicine is projected to reach 4,700. Assuming a predictable growth pattern, the osteopathic profession should produce approximately 5,000 new physicians per year beginning in 2015.

Finally, we applaud the inclusion of provisions that seek to create new training opportunities in nonhospital settings and those that seek to clarify existing regulations governing non-hospital training. The AOA firmly believes that by providing experiences in non-hospital settings for resident physicians, especially those in primary care specialties, increases the likelihood that they will seek practice opportunities in those settings.

Again, thank you for introducing this important legislation. The osteopathic physicians represented by the organizations listed below stand ready to assist you in securing enactment of the provisions included in your legislation.

Sincerely,

Alaska Osteopathic Medical Association  
American Academy of Osteopathy  
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine  
American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Internists  
American College of Osteopathic Neurologists & Psychiatrists  
American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians & Gynecologists  
American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians  
American College of Osteopathic Sclerotherapeutic Pain Management  
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons  
American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine  
American Osteopathic Academy of Medical Informatics  
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics  
American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Osteopathic College of Anesthesiologists  
American Osteopathic College of Dermatology  
American Osteopathic College of Occupational & Preventive Medicine  
American Osteopathic College of Pathologists  
American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation  
American Osteopathic College of Proctology  
American Osteopathic College of Radiology  
American Osteopathic College of Rheumatology, Inc.  
American Osteopathic Colleges of Ophthalmology & Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery  
Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association  
Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association

Colorado Society of Osteopathic Medicine  
Connecticut Osteopathic Medical Society  
Delaware State Osteopathic Medical Society  
Florida Osteopathic Medical Association  
Hawaii Association of Osteopathic Physicians And Surgeons  
Idaho Osteopathic Medical Association  
Illinois Osteopathic Medical Society  
Indiana Osteopathic Association  
Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association  
Iowa State Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine  
Kentucky Osteopathic Medical Association  
Louisiana Osteopathic Medical Association  
Maine Osteopathic Association  
Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians  
Massachusetts Osteopathic Society, Inc  
Michigan Osteopathic Association  
Minnesota Osteopathic Medical Society  
Mississippi Osteopathic Medical Association  
Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons  
Missouri Chapter of the American College of Osteopathic Internists  
Missouri Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
Montana Osteopathic Association  
Nevada Osteopathic Medical Association  
New Hampshire Osteopathic Association, Inc.  
New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons  
New Mexico Osteopathic Medical Association  
New York State Osteopathic Medical Society, Inc.  
North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association  
Ohio Osteopathic Association  
Ohio State Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
Oklahoma Osteopathic Association  
Osteopathic Association of The District of Columbia  
Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of Oregon  
Osteopathic Physicians And Surgeons of California  
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Family Physicians Society  
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association  
Rhode Island Society of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons  
South Carolina Osteopathic Medical Society  
South Dakota Osteopathic Association  
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association  
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association  
Texas Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians  
Vermont State Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons  
Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association  
Washington Osteopathic Medical Association, Inc.  
West Virginia Society of Osteopathic Medicine, Inc.  
Wisconsin Association of Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons