Dear Colleague:

Please join us in sending the following letter to House leadership urging them to continue funding the Teaching Health Center (THC) program. This critical program currently supports the training of primary care physicians and dentists in America’s Community Health Centers.

In July 2014, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a report on graduate medical education (GME) suggesting our national GME system “has not produced an increasing proportion of physicians who choose to practice primary care, to provide care to underserved populations, or to locate in rural or other underserved areas.”

The THC program is well positioned to contribute to the training of the next generation of primary care physicians. THCs are premised on the principle that the most effective way to get new primary-care physicians and dentists into more communities is to train them in community-based settings. THCs train those specialties most in need (family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, geriatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics / gynecology, and dental), in the geographic areas of most need. The THC program is small, yet disproportionately impactful—funding over 500 GME positions nationally—all of which are in primary care.

Funding for the THC program will expire this fall, threatening one of our most successful physician training programs. We invite you to join us in urging the continuation of the THC program and preserve its positive contributions to training the next generation of primary care physicians.

If you would like to sign the letter or need additional information, please have your staff contact Tasha Kellett (Tasha.Kellett@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Niki Tsongas’ office or Colleen McGowan (Colleen.mcgowan@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Doug LaMalfa’s office. **The deadline to sign on is March 20.**

Sincerely,

Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress

Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress
Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

As bipartisan bicameral negotiations begin to unfold in the 114th Congress about the future of the nation’s health programs, we write to urge House Leadership to support a program that currently is having a demonstrable impact on primary care physician workforce development – the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program.

Currently, THCs are training more than 500 primary care physicians and dentists at 60 training sites located in 24 states.\(^1\) THCs are located in federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, and tribal clinics – organizations that care for underserved communities and populations. THC programs have expanded access to care for thousands of patients and have created a physician and dentist workforce pipeline for those communities.

The TCHGME program, funded since 2011 and set to expire on September 30, has increased the numbers of primary care physicians and dentists training to care for underserved populations nationwide. They also play an important role in distributing physicians to communities outside of large urban areas where most teaching hospitals are located. Providing GME training opportunities in diverse geographic locations is important because we know that 55% of all family physicians practice within 100 miles of their residency program and 46% will practice within 50 miles of their training program.\(^2\)

The THCGME program, in our opinion, has met its charge and is worthy of continued support. We look forward to working with you to enhance the program and allow for it to continue its remarkable work of training the next generation of primary care physicians and expanding access to vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

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\(^1\) Robert Graham Center: Teaching Health Center GME Funding Instability Threatens Program Viability | Brown, Klink
\(^2\) Family Medicine: Family Medicine graduate Proximity to Their Site of Training | February 2015 | Fagan, Gibbons, Finnegan, Petterson