

# COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC FAMILY MEDICINE

Association of Departments of Family Medicine  
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors  
North American Primary Care Research Group  
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine



January 28, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins  
US Senate  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester  
US Senate  
311 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Capito  
US Senate  
172 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Doug Jones  
US Senate  
326 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Collins, Tester, Capito, and Jones:

On behalf of the Council of Academic Family Medicine (CAFM), including the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, Association of Departments of Family Medicine, Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors, the North American Primary Care Research Group, we thank you for introducing S. 304, the *Training the Next Generation of Primary Care Doctors Act of 2019*. This legislation is an important step to providing sustainable funding and growth for a critical program that helps address the primary care physician shortage in our country. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and give you our whole-hearted support for the legislation.

To help sustain this important graduate medical education program your legislation provides suitable funding for current Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) programs to help address the crisis-level shortage of primary care physicians. The funding level included in the bill will allow for a per resident amount to be paid for training that is on par with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded study<sup>1</sup> identifying a median cost of approximately \$157,600 per trainee. It allows for programs to regain previous losses of residency positions due to lower funding levels and instability. We are particularly pleased that the legislation would provide a five year reauthorization, giving the program some much needed financial stability.

In addition, we are gratified that the proposed legislation supports and funds the creation of new programs and/or centers, with a priority for those serving rural and medically underserved populations and areas. Evidence shows that the THC program graduates are more likely to practice in rural and medically underserved communities. Recognizing the importance of growing this successful program to help address geographic maldistributions of physicians across the country is significant.

The current authorization for this vital program expires at the end of this fiscal year. Without legislative action, the expiration of this program would mean an exacerbation of the primary

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bhwh.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bhw/grants/thc-costing-fact-sheet.pdf>

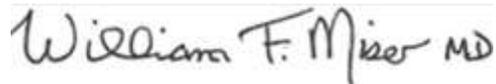
care physician shortage, and a lessening of support for training in underserved and rural areas. Your efforts in support for this program since its inception have been key to keeping it alive. We are grateful to all of you for your exceptional leadership in supporting and sustaining this vital program by introducing this bill and helping to shepherd it toward enactment.

The CAFM organizations and our members are pleased to work with you to secure this legislation's enactment.

Sincerely,



Beat Steiner, MD  
President  
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine



Fred Miser, MD  
President  
Association of Family Medicine  
Residency Directors



Fred Miser, MD  
President  
Association of Family Medicine  
Residency Directors



Judith Belle Brown, PhD  
President  
North American Primary Care  
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