

Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act

Issue:

Illinois' academic medical centers (AMCs) and teaching hospitals train the next generation of physicians, care for the sickest patients and provide specialized services, such as trauma care, organ transplantation, burn care and neonatal intensive care. The Medicare Graduate Medical Education (GME) program helps support Illinois' five world-class AMCs and 55 teaching hospitals in their mission to train the next generation of physicians. Yet, since 1997 the federal government's support for GME has been constrained by a federally-mandated limit on the number of residency slots supported by the Medicare program.

Background:

More than 6,000 medical residents and fellows train in Illinois' AMCs and teaching hospitals, making Illinois among the leading states in training tomorrow's physician workforce. At the same time, the U.S. continues to face a critical shortage of physicians, especially in rural and medically-underserved areas, driven by the growing demand for healthcare as the population ages and more citizens have access to care.

Studies show that the U.S. faces a shortage of as many as 121,300 physicians by 2030, more than half of whom will need to be specialists. Illinois' AMCs, teaching hospitals and medical schools have responded by increasing enrollment and supporting hundreds of training slots above the cap imposed by Congress in 1997. However, it takes up to 10 years to train a physician; and, the ability of Illinois' AMCs and teaching hospitals to continue to support unfunded training slots is becoming increasingly unsustainable. Congress must take action now to help AMCs and teaching hospitals protect access to care and address the anticipated patient demand in the coming years. Lawmakers are urged to increase the number of Medicare-supported residency slots in order to meet the growing demand for future physicians and assist qualified medical school graduates in their desire to become practicing physicians.

Action Requested:

- Support the **Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act** (H.R. 2267/S. 1301), bipartisan legislation that takes an important step towards alleviating the physician shortage by gradually providing 15,000 Medicare-supported GME residency positions over a five-year period.
- Protect the Medicare GME program, including Indirect Medical Education (IME) payments, from cuts and overly-burdensome regulatory requirements.

For more information, contact:

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