



March 1, 2017

The Honorable Mark Segebart  
Chairman  
Iowa State Senate Human Resources Committee  
1820 350<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vail, Iowa 51465

Dear Chairman Segebart:

**The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association (IOMA) are writing in support of SF 285.** This bill establishes a psychiatric practitioner loan repayment program and fund for mental health care providers working in underserved areas of Iowa. The AOA and IOMA believe that this bill will help address physician workforce shortage concerns while also ensuring an adequate supply of psychiatrists in underserved Iowa areas in the future.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at [www.osteopathic.org](http://www.osteopathic.org). IOMA is a professional medical organization that represents over 1,500 DOs providing patient care in Iowa.

**The osteopathic medical profession:**

- **Has long emphasized the importance of providing care to patients in rural and underserved areas**, with a disproportionate amount of DOs providing services in these areas compared to other professionals.
- **Comprises 11% of all US physicians** but is responsible for **16% of patient visits** in communities with **populations of fewer than 2,500**.<sup>1</sup>
- **Represents 40% of all physicians who are located in medically underserved areas** or who treat medically underserved populations.<sup>2</sup>

This commitment by the osteopathic medical profession to provide health care to Iowa's patients is reflected by the osteopathic medical school located in the state, the Des Moines University College of Osteopathic Medicine (DMU-COM). DMU-COM has a current

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<sup>1</sup> Osteopathic Medicine and Medical Education in Brief, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. Available at: <http://www.aacom.org/about/osteomed/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> 2013 National Center for the Analysis of Healthcare Data (NCAHD)'s Enhanced State Licensure

enrollment of 883 students, and over 2,500 DMU-COM graduates are currently working in Iowa.<sup>3</sup>

### The State of Iowa:

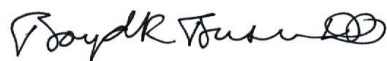
- Currently has **71 Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas**.<sup>4</sup>
- Was ranked **41<sup>st</sup> in the nation** in the number of **practicing psychiatrists** in 2016.<sup>5</sup>
- **Will soon have more psychiatric residency** programs in order to help alleviate the psychiatric physician workforce shortage.<sup>6</sup>

### This legislation would:

- **Create a psychiatric practitioner loan repayment** program and fund.
- **Provide loan repayment assistance** for psychiatrists, advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants who practice in underserved areas.
- Build on the important work that resulted in new psychiatric residency training programs, but **provide incentives for those individuals to stay in Iowa and provide mental health care to patients in the state's rural and underserved areas.**

**The AOA and IOMA believe that SF 285 would help address mental health workforce shortages in Iowa, and we thank you for your leadership in introducing this important piece of legislation.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nick Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, State Government Affairs at [nschilligo@osteopathic.org](mailto:nschilligo@osteopathic.org) or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,



Boyd R. Buser, DO  
President, AOA



Bruce Ricker, DO  
President, IOMA

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.dmu.edu/about/>.

<sup>4</sup> No author. "Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)." *Kaiser Family Foundation*, Mar. 1, 2017. Available at: <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?activeTab=map&currentTimeframe=0&selectedDistributions=total-mental-health-care-hpsa-designations&selectedRows=%7B%22nested%22:%7B%22iowa%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D> .

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Russell. "Critical Shortage of Psychiatrists in Iowa Addressed." *Iowa Public Radio*, Available at: <http://iowapublicradio.org/post/critical-shortage-psychiatrists-iowa-addressed#stream/0>

<sup>6</sup> O. Kay Henderson. "Three new residency programs in Iowa for psychiatry students." Available at: <http://www.radioiowa.com/2016/03/07/three-new-residency-programs-in-iowa-for-psychiatry-students/>

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