



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

TREATING OUR FAMILY AND YOURS



March 10, 2017

The Honorable Carlos E. Tobon  
Rhode Island State House Committee on Finance  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Representative Tobon:

**The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Rhode Island Society of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (RISOPS) are writing to urge you to maintain support for Medicaid Graduate Medical Education (GME) funding in H 5175.** This bill makes appropriations for Fiscal Year 2018. One of the key provisions eliminates Medicaid GME funding for academic medical centers that provide care to the state's critically ill and indigent populations. The AOA and RISOPS strongly encourage you to reconsider your support for elimination of this funding, which helps Rhode Island attract and maintain an adequate number of physicians to provide critical services to the state's underserved populations.

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). RISOPS is a professional organization that represents over 300 DOs providing patient care in Rhode Island.

#### **The importance of maintaining current GME:**

- Today, Rhode Island has **14 designated Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)**.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately **25% of the state's physicians are near retirement**.<sup>2</sup>
- This bill **eliminates up to \$2.5 million per year in funding for Medicaid GME at academic medical centers** with Level I Trauma Centers that **provide care to the state's critically ill and indigent populations**.
- It also **deletes up to \$5 million annually in additional Medicaid payments to hospitals** that provide GME training for at least 250 interns and residents per year and have a minimum of 25,000 inpatient discharges per year for all patients regardless of health care coverage.

---

<sup>1</sup> No author. State Health Facts: Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). *The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation*, April 28, 2014. Accessed on March 8, 2017. Available at: <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/primary-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas>

<sup>2</sup> No author. "2011 State Physician Workforce Data Book." *Association of American Medical Colleges*, November, 2011. Accessed on March 8, 2017. Available at: <https://www.aamc.org/download/263512/data/statedata2011.pdf>.

The Honorable Carlos E. Tobon

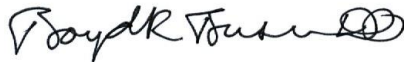
March 10, 2017

Page 2

- **This funding helps ensure that Rhode Island has an adequate supply of residency training positions and ultimately increases the number of physicians in the state.**

GME is a vital part of physician training, and maintaining state funding will allow Rhode Island to train more physicians to provide health care in underserved communities. **We urge you to maintain funding for GME in Rhode Island in appropriations bill H 5175.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nicholas 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



Gregory G. Allen Jr., DO  
President, RISOPS

CC: Mark A. Baker, DO, AOA President-elect  
William J. Burke, DO, Chair, AOA Department of Governmental Affairs  
Richard Thacker, DO, Chair, AOA Bureau of State Government Affairs  
Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, AOA Chief Executive Officer  
Laura Wooster, MPH, Senior Vice President, AOA Public Policy  
Nicholas Schilligo, MS, Associate Vice President, AOA State Government Affairs  
Samyuktha Gumidyala, MPH, Affiliate Executive, RISOPS