

WORKFORCE/GME

Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act (H.R. 1763/S. 348)

REQUEST

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine urges Congress to address the physician workforce shortages in many specialties that will jeopardize access to care by cosponsoring the bipartisan **Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act** (H.R. 1763/S. 348) introduced by Representatives Terri Sewell (D-AL) and John Katko (R-NY); and Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ), John Boozman (R-AR), and Charles Schumer (D-NY).

BILL SUMMARY

The **Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act** will improve the nation's Graduate Medical Education (GME) system and help to preserve access to specialty care by:

- Increasing Medicare-supported GME residency slots by 15,000 over the next five years;
- Directing half of the newly available positions to training in shortage specialties;
- Specifying priorities for distributing the new slots (e.g., states with new medical schools); and
- Studying strategies to increase the diversity of the health professional workforce.

BACKGROUND

According to an April 2019 report by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the United States will face an overall shortage of between 46,900-121,900 physicians by 2032. Specialty shortages will be particularly large –24,800-65,800 for specialists and 14,300-23,400 for surgeons-- including neurosurgeons, urologists, cardiologists, gastroenterologists, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, and general surgeons. A 2016 report by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) found that by 2025, ophthalmology and orthopedic surgery are each expected to need more than 5,000 physicians over current levels, while urology will see a shortfall of 3,630 physicians and general surgery a shortage of 2,970. Growth in future demand for physicians will be highest among specialties that predominantly serve the elderly.

More than twenty years ago, Congress froze the number of Medicare funded residency slots as part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (BBA). Updates are necessary to address population growth, shortages in certain medical specialties, and to keep up with the development of new specialties. Specialty physicians require up to seven years of post-graduate residency training. By the time this crisis further manifests itself, we will be unable to quickly correct it.

CONTACT

HOUSE: To cosponsor H.R. 1763, please contact Hillary.Bead@mail.house.gov (Rep. Sewell) or Jennifer.Wood@mail.house.gov (Rep. Katko).

SENATE: To cosponsor S. 348, please contact Swarna_Vallurupalli@menendez.senate.gov (Sen. Menendez) or Ryan_Losak@boozman.senate.gov (Sen. Boozman).