

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 19, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell:

We are writing to request that the Senate act as soon as possible to pass a multi-year reauthorization of the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program.


Teaching Health Centers (THCs) face a January 31 deadline to submit a final number of medical residency slots which they will try to fill between now and Match Day on March 15. Without the certainty of a multi-year reauthorization and the proposed funding increases, it is very difficult for THCs to commit to medical school graduates for the academic year that starts this July 1. As a result, we have been advised that there could be reductions in the number of residency slots the THCs attempt to fill, and thus our states might end up with fewer primary care physicians. Our teaching health centers need certainty so they can train new providers to serve the rural communities that sorely need them.

Prompt Senate passage of THCGME reauthorization and finalization of the bill language with the House will help avoid disruption to the THCs and their residents and patients. This program solves gaps in access to high-quality primary, mental, and dental health care by supporting the development of the next generation of physicians and dentists to serve in both urban and rural underserved communities. THCs have trained thousands of medical and dental residents and is the only federal program training physicians in a community setting rather than a hospital setting. For the current 2023-2024 academic year, there are 81 THCs in 23 states with 1,096 medical residents handling more than an estimated one million patient visits annually in rural and urban medically underserved communities. 82% of THC graduates remain in primary care practice, compared to 23% of traditional residency graduates; and 20% of THC graduates practice in rural America, compared to eight percent of traditional residency graduates.


In addition, 90 organizations received HHS THC Planning and Development grants and have developed proposals to start new medical and dental residency programs under the THCGME program, including seven in New York and two in Kentucky. Without Congress' support, many of these Planning and Development grantees will have to cancel their plans for training new physicians and dentists to serve their communities, losing significant investment.

We look forward to working with you on reauthorization of this important program.


Sincerely,




Jon Tester
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator




Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator




Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator




Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



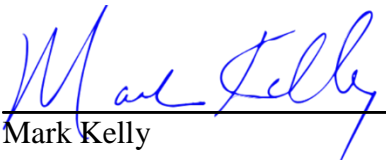
Peter Welch
United States Senator




Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



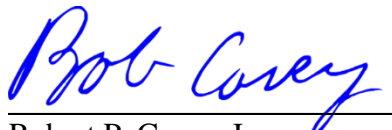
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United States Senator




Mark Kelly
United States Senator




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United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator




Gary C. Peters
United States Senator




Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



John Fetterman
United States Senator



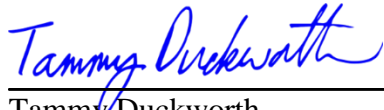
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United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Katie Boyd Britt
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator