

September 13, 2023

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair McMorris Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone,

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I offer our strong support for the seven-year reauthorization and funding increase for the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program, as well as the two-year reauthorizations of funding for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Community Health Centers, included in the *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act* (H.R. 5378). These critical programs serve as the backbone of healthcare in many rural and medically-underserved communities and deserve the support of Congress.

AACOM leads and advocates for osteopathic medical education (OME) to improve the health of the public. Founded in 1898 by the nation's osteopathic medical schools, AACOM represents all 41 colleges of osteopathic medicine — educating more than 35,000 future physicians, 25 percent of all US medical students — at 65 medical school campuses, as well as osteopathic graduate medical education professionals and trainees at US medical centers, hospitals, clinics and health systems.

The OME community strongly supports the THCGME Program and its mission to train primary care medical residents in community-based settings. In fact, of the 769 primary care residents training in THCs around the country in academic year 2020-2021, over half were osteopathic residents. The Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences College of Medicine, Washington's only osteopathic medical school, has 45 percent of its graduates enter primary care specialties. The Rowan-Virtua School of Osteopathic Medicine produces a similar pipeline of physicians for New Jersey, with nearly 60 percent of its 2023 graduates matching into primary care specialties and almost half of them entering residency training in New Jersey. The THCGME Program is critical to ensuring future osteopathic physicians across the country have increased opportunities to pursue primary care. Furthermore, colleges of osteopathic medicine routinely place medical students into federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics for clinical rotations



and many Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine participate in the National Health Service Corps programs.

I look forward to continuing our work together to support a healthcare system that will enable future osteopathic physicians to provide primary care to patients in need. For questions or additional information, please contact me at dbergman@aacom.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Bergman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

David Bergman, JD
Senior Vice President, Government Relations and Health Affairs