

June 2, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray and Chairman Pallone:

We are writing to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Doctors of Community Act (“DOC Act”). This landmark legislation would permanently extend funding for the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program and ensure sustainable funding that will help increase access for rural and urban medically-underserved Americans by training and producing primary care physicians to serve these populations for the future.

As strong advocates for improving primary care services and training in medically-underserved communities, we were very grateful that Congress recently reauthorized this program for three years, which will help provide some stability for the 59 medical training programs at the THC. We were also grateful for the additional \$330 million appropriated in the American Rescue Plan Act, which permits the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the expansion of existing THCs and add new THCs around the country.

The DOC Act will significantly improve healthcare access for millions of Americans. The permanent extension and substantial funding increase will allow THCs to manage their residency programs more efficiently and grow the number of residents in training from the current 769 to more than 3,000 by the time it is fully implemented. The DOC Act ensures that each state will have at least one THC, which is an improvement over the current presence of THCs in only half our states. The achievement of this long-held goal, and the addition of more than 2,000 new physicians in underserved areas, will make an important long-term impact on the physician shortage – a shortage that adversely impacts the health of so many Americans.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues on both sides of the aisle to secure passage of the DOC Act this year.

Sincerely,

American Association of Teaching Health Centers
National Association of Community Health Centers
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
Council of Academic Family Medicine
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Osteopathic Association
Society of General Internal Medicine