

January 13, 2022

The Honorable Tom Cole
U.S. House of Representatives
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
U.S. House of Representatives
2421 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dina Titus
U.S. House of Representatives
2464 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Cole, Mullin, and Titus:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) writes to express support for the Medical Student Education Authorization Act.

A talented, qualified, engaged and diverse workforce is at the heart of America's health care system. But hospitals and health systems face mounting and critical staffing shortages that could jeopardize access to care in the communities they serve. Turnovers and vacancies are climbing, upwards of 30% for some positions, as hospitals struggle to retain and support an exhausted workforce who have been on the front lines battling COVID-19 for nearly two years.

While some of these challenges pre-date the pandemic, the toll it has taken means that the expected shortages by the end of the decade will top 3 million health care workers. A 2021 Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that nearly 30% of health care workers are considering leaving their profession altogether, and nearly 60% reported impacts to their mental health stemming from their work during the pandemic.

The ongoing staffing shortages, which contribute to the stress and burnout of care teams, along with the heavy reliance on contract temporary labor, means our communities are being left vulnerable. Our nation simply does not have enough clinicians to care for patients today and not enough are in the training pipeline for the future. Further, the health and well-being of doctors, nurses and all health care workers is on an unsustainable path.



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These shortages contribute to a national emergency that demands immediate attention. Your bipartisan bill, the Medical Student Education Authorization Act, provides one important remedy to the current situation. The legislation would provide grants to public institutions of higher education to expand or support graduate education for physicians and focuses these grants to institutions in states with the most severe primary care provider shortages. Training experience in medically underserved communities increases a physician's cultural awareness of such areas and the likelihood that the physician will practice there.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of the nation's health care workforce. The AHA looks forward to working with you to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Stacey Hughes
Executive Vice President