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AMA Urges Continued Support for Adequate Graduate Medical Education Funding to Meet Future Physician Workforce Needs

Statement attributable to: Ardis Dee Hoven, M.D., Immediate Past President, American Medical Association

“In light of the Institute of Medicine’s report on graduate medical education governance and finance released today, the AMA is renewing its commitment to addressing physician shortages in needed specialties and regions to improve access to health care.

“While the AMA appreciates the Institute of Medicine’s efforts to review graduate medical education governance and funding, we remain concerned about the need to recognize the nation’s potential physician shortages and the need for adequately funded physician training.

“Despite the fact that workforce experts predict a shortage of more than 45,000 primary care and 46,000 specialty physicians in the U.S. by 2020, the report provides no clear solution to increasing the overall number of graduate medical education positions to ensure there are enough physicians to meet actual workforce needs.

“The AMA will continue to actively support efforts to ensure there are enough physicians in the workforce to meet patient needs, including efforts to increase medical school class sizes and advocate for additional medical residency slots to train more physicians.

“The AMA believes the number of residency slots must be increased to produce an appropriately sized and geographically distributed physician workforce to accommodate our country’s future health care needs. The AMA will continue to encourage the federal and state government, along with private payers, to fund graduate medical education to protect access to care and address physician shortages in undersupplied specialties and underserved areas.

“As part of these efforts, the AMA sent a letter last week to Congress urging support for the Creating Access to Residency Education Act of 2014 (CARE Act) that would authorize federal grants for new residency positions. The AMA also recently adopted policy supporting state legislation to increase funding to train more physicians to meet local workforce needs.

“The AMA also believes that major innovations are needed in undergraduate medical education to address workforce needs, which is why the AMA has been working with medical schools to support new models of education to increase efficiency and reduce redundancy in medical education. The AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education initiative aims to improve readiness for work of physicians in training - to ensure patients have access to the care they need when they need it.”

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About the AMA
The American Medical Association is the premier national organization dedicated to empowering the nation’s physicians to continually provide safer, higher quality, and more efficient care to patients and communities. For more than 165 years the AMA has been unwavering in its commitment to using its unique position and knowledge to shape a healthier future for America.

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