

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton  
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and  
Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Nathan Deal  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Waxman and Pallone and Ranking Members Barton and Deal:

The undersigned organizations strongly object to provisions in the House tri-committee health care reform discussion draft requiring the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate graduate medical education (GME) training programs. Among other requirements, Section 1505 (b)(1)(B) & (b)(2) would instruct the GAO to assess faculty expertise; develop curricular requirements; and assess the accreditation processes of the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

As a profession, medicine and allied health professionals are committed to continuing to evaluate, identify, and reinforce the goals of health professional training already established by the ACGME, American Osteopathic Association's Council on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), Residency Review Committees, professional boards, and state licensure authorities in the interest of public health. We share the House of Representatives' interest in assuring a well-trained health workforce that is aligned with the needs of communities and an evolving health care system. We will continue to work with all members of Congress to ensure that health professions training and the broader health care delivery system meet the goals of improving the health of the nation.

The activities specified in 1505 fall far beyond the expertise and capabilities of the GAO and must remain the purview of educational programs and their accreditation bodies. Educational accreditation and curriculum design in the health professions is strongly integrated with requirements of pre-professional education; medical and other professional education; and licensure and certification. Intrusion of non-qualified governmental entities aimed at directing educational content and instruction is unlikely to benefit patients but may create unintended consequences such as violating express goals of states and certification bodies that are currently charged with assuring the public's health and maintaining standards of professional practice.

We strongly urge that the House health care reform discussion draft Section 1505 (b)(1)(B) & (b)(2) be removed from the final House health care reform legislation.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Neurology Professional Association  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy  
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists  
American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residence Training  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American Board of Allergy and Immunology  
American Board of Anesthesiology  
American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery  
American Board of Dermatology  
American Board of Emergency Medicine  
American Board of Family Medicine  
American Board of Medical Genetics  
American Board of Medical Specialties  
American Board of Neurological Surgery  
American Board of Nuclear Medicine  
American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery  
American Board of Otolaryngology  
American Board of Pathology  
American Board of Pediatrics  
American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology  
American Board of Thoracic Surgery  
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
American College of Cardiology  
American College of Chest Physicians  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Osteopathic Internists  
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American College of Radiology  
American College of Surgeons  
American Gastroenterological Association

American Medical Association  
American Orthopaedic Association  
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy  
American Society for Radiation Oncology  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Academic Physiatrists  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology  
Child Neurology Society  
College of American Pathologists  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Council of Medical Specialty Societies  
Heart Rhythm Society  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology  
Medical Group Management Association  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Vascular Surgery  
Society of Critical Care Medicine  
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists  
Society of Neurological Surgeons  
Society of Nuclear Medicine  
The Endocrine Society  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

cc: Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor