



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

June 13, 2013

Honorable Jack Reed
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Roy Blunt
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support of S. 1152, the “Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act”

Dear Senators Reed and Blunt:

As the Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance), our mission is to advocate for sound federal health care policy that fosters patient access to the highest quality specialty care. As patient and physician advocates, the Alliance writes in support of your legislation, S. 1152, the “Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act”, which will strengthen the health care workforce through improving core competencies and providing grants to states for medical scholarship programs to encourage health professionals to stay and practice in the state. There is currently a severe physician workforce shortage in primary care and many specialties. Clearly, this shortage will only worsen with the health care expansion in the Affordable Care Act, in addition to the baby boomers entering their senior years.

While the Alliance acknowledges the need to increase the number of available primary care providers, this only addresses part of the problem. The United States will face an overall shortage of more than 130,000 physicians by 2025. One-half of this shortage, however, will come from specialty physicians, including neurosurgeons, urologists, cardiologists, gastroenterologists, plastic and reconstructive surgeons, and orthopaedic surgeons. Given the increased demand created for their services by an aging population and expanded insurance coverage, we need to take steps now to ensure a fully trained specialty physician workforce for the future. Your legislation will begin to help improve the acute shortage of specialty physicians, including addressing geographic distribution based on local need.

Both primary and specialist care physicians are an integral part of American medicine. We support the state scholarship retention program proposed in your legislation, which accommodates both specialty and primary care medical scholarship programs. The core competencies provision in your bill will further help to foster innovation in the training of both primary and specialty care physicians.

American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery • American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Mohs Surgery • American Gastroenterological Association • American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery
American Society of Echocardiography • American Society of Plastic Surgeons • American Urological Association
Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations • Congress of Neurological Surgeons • National Association of Spine Specialists
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions • Society for Excellence in Eyecare

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Your legislation would improve the nation's medical education system and help to preserve access to essential health services for many Americans. For these reasons, the undersigned organizations of the Alliance support your legislation, S. 1152, the "Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act."

Sincerely,

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