May 4, 2015

Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support of S. 1148, the “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2015”

Dear Senators Nelson and Schumer:

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. 1148, the “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2015”, which would increase the number of Graduate Medical Education (GME) residency positions by 15,000 over the next 5 years in order to tackle the severe physician manpower shortage. 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. According to 2015 study, the United States will face an overall shortage of between 46,000-90,000 physicians by 2025. Specialty shortages will be particularly large, including neurosurgeons, urologists, cardiologists, gastroenterologists, 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. We are in agreement that this legislation will begin to help improve the acute shortage of specialty physicians.

The Alliance recognizes that both primary care providers and specialists are an integral part of American medicine. We support the report included as part of your legislation that would study the needs of the US healthcare system and allocate residencies accordingly.

www.specialtydocs.org
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Your legislation would improve the nation’s graduate medical education system and help to preserve access to essential health services for many Americans. For these reasons, the undersigned organizations of the Alliance extend our strong support of your legislation, S. 1148, the “Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2015.”

Sincerely,

American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Mohs Surgery
American Gastroenterological Association
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Echocardiography
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Association
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