

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 12, 2017

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Burgess
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Walden and Burgess and Ranking Members Pallone and Green:

We respectfully encourage you to reauthorize the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program, which is set to expire on September 30, 2017, and to set the program on a path for stable and sustainable funding to ensure its future, long-term viability.

Teaching Health Centers (THCs) were established to address the crisis-level shortage of primary care physicians, especially in rural and medically underserved communities. Since then, the program has grown from 63 residents to 742 residents spread across 59 THCs in 27 states and the District of Columbia. THCGME residents will provide more than one million primary care medical visits in 2017 to underserved communities. Regardless of this substantial growth, THCGME made up less than 0.5 percent of the annual federal outlay committed for training physicians in FY2016.

These residents are specifically training in specialties with the largest shortages nationally, including family medicine, general internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, and dentistry. Furthermore, when compared with traditional Medicare GME residents, residents who train at THCs are more likely to practice primary care (82 percent vs. 23 percent) and remain in underserved (55 percent vs. 26 percent) or rural (20 percent vs. 8 percent) communities. It is clear that the well-designed THCGME program not only plays a vital role in training our next generation of primary care physicians, but helps bridge our nation's physician shortfall.

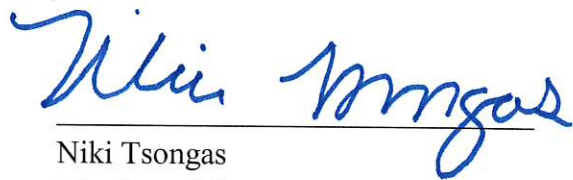
We recommend that you consider a reauthorization of at least three years to match the length of these residencies and to include a per resident allocation that more truly reflects the cost of training each resident than the current level. Without this reauthorization, THCs across the country could be forced to close, resulting in abrupt disruptions in resident training; potential reductions in patient care, especially for some of our nation's most vulnerable populations; and the end of a successful effort to address primary care shortages.

In 2015, the THCGME program was extended for an additional two years under the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 with strong bipartisan support. We believe this vital program deserves a permanent place in our nation's graduate medical education programming and we look forward to working with you to ensure its continued successes.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress




Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



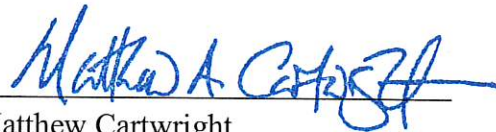
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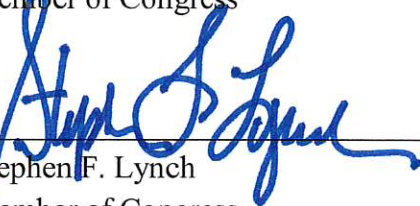

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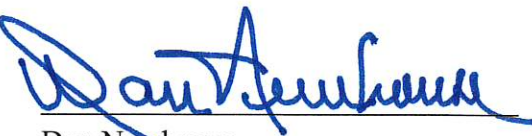

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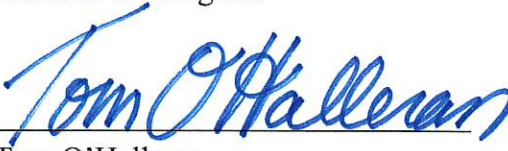

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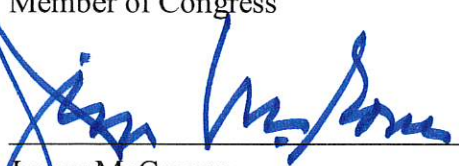

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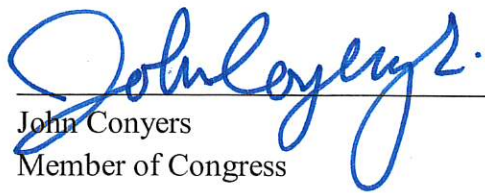

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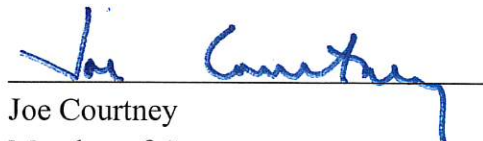

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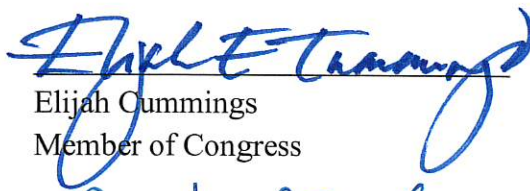

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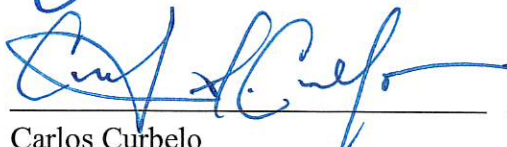

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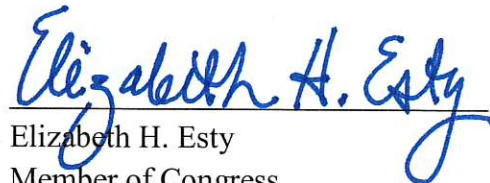

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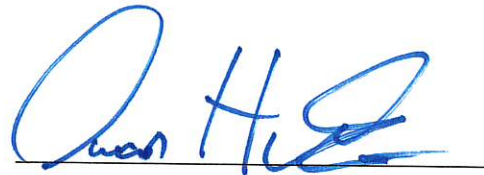

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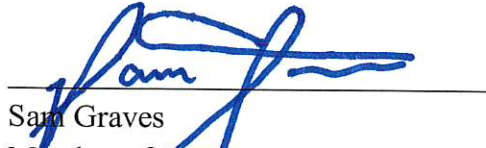

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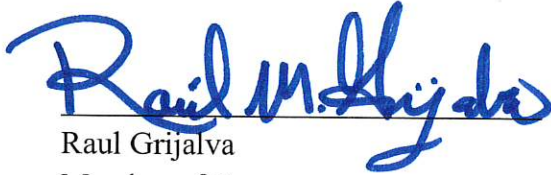
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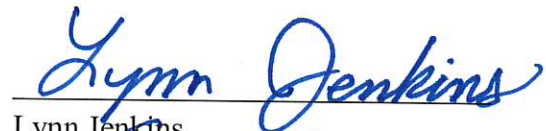
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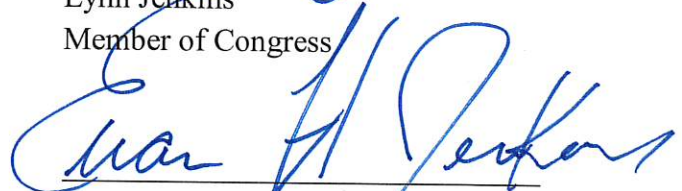
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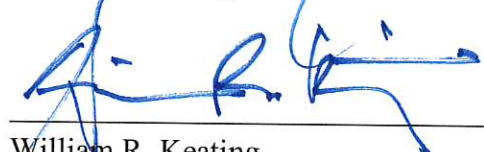
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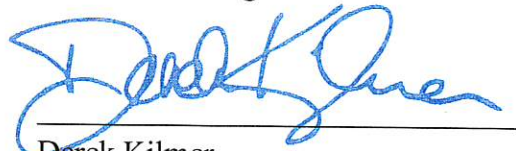
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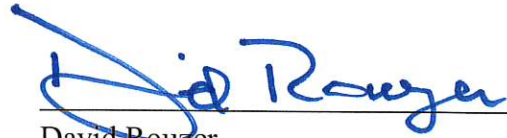
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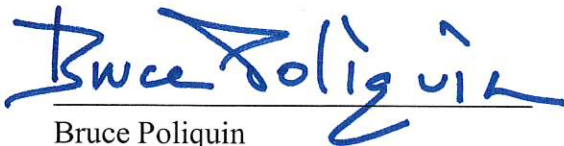
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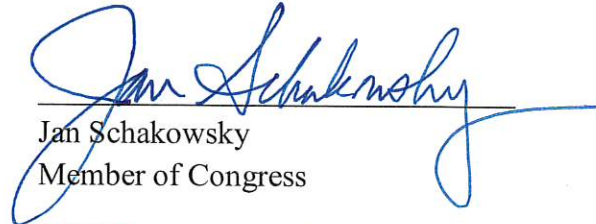
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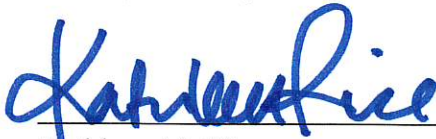
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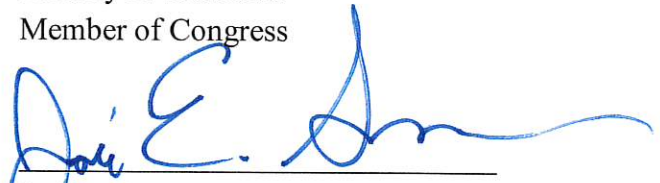
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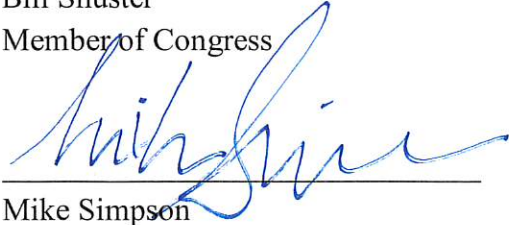
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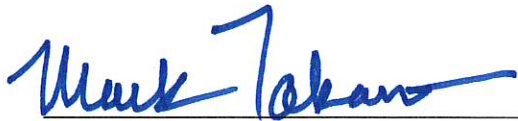
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Elise Stefanik
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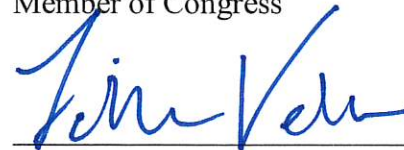
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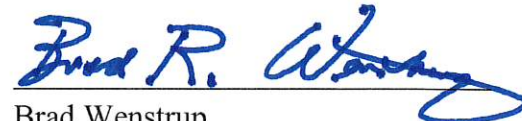
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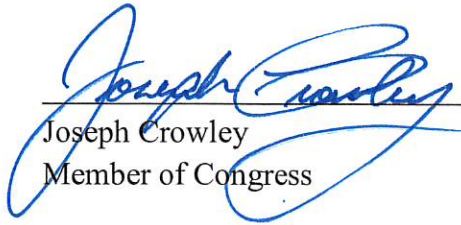
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