

AAMC News - Press Releases

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AAMC Statement on Introduction of Legislation Supporting New Residency Positions to Combat Opioid Epidemic

AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) President and CEO Darrell G. Kirch, MD, issued the following statement regarding introduction of the “Opioid Workforce Act of 2018” in both the House and Senate:

“As our nation faces an opioid epidemic that is devastating communities across the country, we commend Representatives Joseph Crowley (D-N.Y.) and Ryan Costello (R-Pa.) and Senators Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Dean Heller (R-Nev.) for introducing the bipartisan Opioid Workforce Act of 2018. This thoughtful bill would provide Medicare support for an additional 1,000 graduate medical education positions over the next five years in hospitals that have, or are in the process of establishing, accredited residency programs in addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, or pain management.

Through their missions of education, research, and clinical care, medical schools and teaching hospitals are [actively advancing a comprehensive response](#) to the opioid crisis, including preparing the next generation of health care professionals to address the epidemic. The addition of these targeted slots would increase the ability of these institutions to train more physicians who are specialized to treat patients with substance use disorders and chronic pain. This important legislation would strengthen the health care workforce serving on the front lines of the nation’s opioid epidemic, and we urge Congress to include it in any final package to combat the opioid crisis.

Additionally, as our nation faces a projected shortage of up to [120,000 physicians across a number of disciplines by 2030](#), enhancing federal support for residency positions is one step toward addressing the diverse patient care needs of our growing, aging population. In order to further [address the physician shortage](#), the AAMC also strongly supports the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017 ([H.R. 2267](#); [S. 1301](#)), which would provide Medicare support for an additional 3,000 residency positions each year for five years.

The nation’s medical schools and teaching hospitals look forward to continuing to work with congressional leaders to increase federal support for residency training that will help alleviate the doctor shortage for the benefit of all Americans.”

The Association of American Medical Colleges is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health care through innovative medical education, cutting-edge patient care, and groundbreaking medical research. Its members are all 151 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC serves the leaders of America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 173,000 full-time faculty members, 89,000 medical students, 129,000 resident physicians, and more than 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

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Related Resources

- [Responding to the Opioid Epidemic Through Education, Patient Care, and Research](#)
AAMC Key Issues
- [GME Funding and Its Role in Addressing the Physician Shortage](#)
AAMC Key Issues