



December 7, 2009

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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Dear Senator,

On behalf of the nation's 131 medical schools and nearly 400 teaching hospitals, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) strongly urges you to cosponsor SA 2909, a health care reform amendment that will address the currently growing physician shortage. Without it, there will not be enough physicians to care for newly insured individuals. Additionally, the nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals signed a July 2 letter to Senate Finance Chairman, Max Baucus (D-MT), urging the expansion of Medicare-supported graduate medical education (GME) training slots.

Filed December 4 by Majority Leader Reid (D-NV), along with Sens. Nelson (D-FL), Schumer (D-NY), Kerry (D-MA), Stabenow (D-MI), and Leahy (D-VT), SA 2909 will assure an adequate supply of physicians for our aging population, as well as the millions of Americans who will gain health care access under the "Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act." It will do so by expanding Medicare's support for GME. The amendment adds 15,000 new training slots, which would produce 40,000 new doctors over the next 10 years.

Why is this amendment so important?

- Even without health care reform, the nation faces a shortage of at least 125,000 physicians by 2025.
- Expanded access under health care reform will increase that shortage by as much as 25 percent.
- Since it takes as many as 10 years to educate and train a doctor, we must act now to assure an adequate supply of physicians in the future.
- Mounting evidence indicates a shortage among both primary care and many specialties.
- Over one-third of our physicians are over age 55 and are likely to retire within the next two decades.
- As the nation ages and develops complex and multiple illnesses, the demand for physician services will grow.

Please cosponsor SA 2909 to assure physician access for all Americans now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Atul Grover", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Atul Grover, MD, PhD, FACP, FCCP
Chief Advocacy Officer, AAMC

cc: Senate Health Legislative Assistants