



**Association of
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Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

May 17, 2018

The Honorable Bill Nelson
U.S. Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dean Heller
U.S. Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Nelson and Heller:

On behalf of the nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals, thank you for introducing the Opioid Workforce Act of 2018 (S. 2843). This thoughtful, bipartisan legislation 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. We greatly appreciate your commitment to advancing policies that would strengthen the health care workforce serving on the front lines of the nation's opioid epidemic.

As you know, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) estimates that the United States faces a shortage of up to 120,000 physicians across a number of disciplines by 2030. Although the nation's 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 further strengthen the ability of these institutions to train more physicians who are specialized to treat patients with substance use disorders and chronic pain.

Additionally, enhancing federal support for residency positions is a critical component of any effort to address the diverse patient care needs of our growing, aging population. We again thank you for introducing the more comprehensive Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017 (S. 1301), which would address the larger physician shortage by providing Medicare support for an additional 3,000 residency positions each year for five years.

The AAMC greatly values your continued support and applauds your efforts. We look forward to working with you to secure the passage of this legislation. Thank you for being a champion of academic medicine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell G. Kirch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Darrell G. Kirch, MD