



February 13, 2024

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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aamc.org

The Honorable Tim Kaine
231 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jen Kiggans
1037 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Wild
1027 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Buddy Carter
2432 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Dingell
102 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Kaine and Young and Reps. Kiggans, Wild, Carter, and Dingell:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to thank you for the reintroduction of the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Reauthorization Act (S. 3679, H.R. 7153), which reauthorizes key initiatives that help address suicide, mental health, and burnout of health professionals.

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) is a nonprofit association dedicated to improving the health of people everywhere through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 157 U.S. medical schools accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education; 13 accredited Canadian medical schools; approximately 400 academic health systems and teaching hospitals, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools, academic health systems and teaching hospitals, and the millions of individuals across academic medicine, including more than 193,000 full-time faculty members, 96,000 medical students, 153,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences. Following a 2022 merger, the Alliance of Academic Health Centers and the Alliance of Academic Health Centers International broadened participation in the AAMC by U.S. and international academic health centers.

Physicians and other health professionals dedicate their careers to keeping people healthy, but too often they do not receive the care they need to address their own well-being. AAMC data

shows that, like the overall U.S. physician population, a large percentage of medical school faculty have experienced higher levels of stress, and nearly a third of medical faculty face one or more symptoms of burnout.¹ In addition to their detrimental effect on health professionals and their families, burnout, stress, and other behavioral health issues negatively affect patient care, patient experience, and overall health outcomes.

There are numerous systemic and other sources for the high levels of stress and burnout that have long plagued health professionals, and the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the problem. Yet, stigma, bias, and other barriers can hinder health professionals from seeking and receiving care for new or ongoing mental and behavioral health challenges.

The Dr. Lorna Breen Healthcare Provider Protection Act has taken steps to reverse these troubling trends through investments to prevent suicide, reduce burnout, and promote care for mental and behavioral health conditions among health care professionals. While the ability of any single educational intervention on its own to overcome pervasive systemic challenges is limited, we believe that these grants help train health professionals in strategies to reduce stress and burnout and would represent an important effort to raise awareness among health care professionals about the need to prioritize their well-being.

Thank you again for your ongoing efforts to promote physician well-being and toward our mutual goal of improved health for all. We look forward to continuing to work with you as the legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle P. Turnipseed". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Danielle Turnipseed, JD, MHSA, MPP
AAMC Chief Public Policy Officer

CC: David J. Skorton, MD, President and CEO

¹ <https://www.aamc.org/system/files/reports/1/february2019burnoutamongusmedicalschoolfaculty.pdf>