



American College of Osteopathic Internists • Stay True to Why You Pursued Medicine

February 5, 2026

The Honorable Terri Sewell
U.S. House of Representatives
1035 House Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representatives
271 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Sewell and Fitzpatrick:

The American College of Osteopathic Internists (ACOI) offers its endorsement of the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2025* (H.R. 4731). The escalating physician workforce shortage in the United States, especially in rural and underserved areas, is a pressing public health issue and should be addressed by Congress with a sense of urgency.

The ACOI represents the nation's osteopathic internists, medical subspecialists, fellows, residents, and students. Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DOs) are licensed to practice the full scope of medicine in all 50 states and in all specialties and represent a growing segment of the physician community.

The number of osteopathic medical schools has more than doubled over the past two decades, with the majority located in rural or underserved regions. There are currently 46 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States, delivering instruction at 73 teaching locations in 36 states.¹ At present, these colleges are educating more than 38,000 future physicians—roughly 30 percent of all U.S. medical students.

Despite the growing interest in osteopathic medicine, there is an overall and worsening shortage of physicians across all specialties. By 2036, it is projected the physician deficit could grow up to 86,000.² The reasons for this are multifactorial, including an aging physician workforce, and burnout that coincides with a rapidly aging population. We appreciate your addressing gaps in the physician workforce with the urgency it requires through your legislation that would add 2,000 Medicare-supported graduate medical education (GME) slots annually over seven years, for a total of 14,000 new positions.

We appreciate your recognition that to increase the diversity of physicians from rural and underrepresented communities, a portion of new GME positions should be directed to certain hospitals, including those in rural or health professional shortage areas; those training physicians

¹ American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. Accessed January 28, 2026 at <https://www.aacom.org/become-a-doctor/prepare-for-medical-school/us-colleges-of-osteopathic-medicine>.

² GlobalData, The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections From 2021 to 2036, Association of American Medical Colleges, March 2024. <https://www.aamc.org/media/75231/download?attachment#:~:text=Physician demand is projected to, and 86,000 physicians by 2036.>



above their existing resident caps; hospitals in states with new medical schools, including osteopathic medical schools, or campuses; and hospitals affiliated with historically Black medical schools.

ACOI is grateful for your leadership, and we look forward to working with you toward passage of H.R. 4731 in the 119th Congress. Should you require additional information or want to connect with osteopathic physician experts on this or other health policy issues, please contact Tim McNichol, ACOI Chief Operating Officer, at tmcnichol@acoi.org or (301) 231-8877.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'DL Baker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Damon L. Baker, DO, MACOI
President, American College of Osteopathic Internists