



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capital Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

December 2, 2016

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Dear Governor Wolf:

On behalf of the Commonwealth's family physicians, the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP), which represents more than 5,500 physicians, residents and students of family medicine statewide, would like to encourage your continued support of the Family Medicine Residency Expansion program within the Department of Health.

Since 1992, the Primary Health Care Practitioner Program created by Act 113 of 1992 has served an important role in advancing access to primary health care through various efforts including its loan repayment program, leading to hundreds of physicians serving in rural and underserved areas of Pennsylvania, also known as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Area (MUAs).

In 2014, the Department dedicated some of those funds to partner with the PAFP in establishing an innovative three-year project designed to increase access to primary care physicians in Pennsylvania's underserved rural and urban areas by expanding family medicine residency training positions. Recognizing that family medicine residents tend to practice in the region where they trained, and that family physicians are trained to practice in community settings with traditionally underserved communities, the Department's investment in the family physician workforce pipeline is a responsible venture. Expanding the number of training opportunities in Pennsylvania supports selected family medicine residencies to grow, thereby strengthening their impact with more graduates to serve their region.

In partnership with PAFP, the following training institutions have received \$100,000 per year, per new family medicine residency slot (nine new positions, total):

UPMC Altoona Regional Health System, Family Medicine Residency Program: 2 residents

Excelsa Latrobe Hospital, Family Medicine Residency Program: 2 residents

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Medicine, Family Medicine Residency Program: 3 residents

Crozer-Keystone Health System, Family Medicine Residency Program: 2 residents

With your continued support, our hope is to renew and expand the program in 2017 to support 14 new family medicine residency slots throughout Pennsylvania. Without continuing support from the Department, these new training slots may be in jeopardy.

For 10 consecutive years, family physicians have been the most highly recruited specialty in medicine. Additionally, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), 68 percent of doctors who complete their training in one state end up practicing there. This means that investment in residency training programs is critical to retention of family doctors in Pennsylvania.

As the traditional training paradigm of the nation's hospitals has produced increasingly highly specialized physicians, health care outcomes and community health have declined and health care expenses have ballooned to unsustainable levels. Experts tout the value of access to primary care physicians as a factor correlated with improved health care outcomes and reduced health care costs.

While there is still a long way to go to see our training institutions producing the physicians our nation needs, Pennsylvania's family medicine residency programs remain among the most competitive in the country. There are more applicants than there are slots available. Strategic state investment at this level remains a wise investment in public health.

Respectfully, we hope your Administration will continue and expand this program, and again propose to fully fund the Primary Care Practitioner line item.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,



PAFP President Rob Rodak, DO



Donald Beckstead, MD
Director, UPMC Altoona
Family Medicine Residency



Margaret Baylson, MD, MPH
Director, University of Pennsylvania
Family Medicine Residency



Michael Semelka, DO
Director, Excelsa Latrobe
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William J. Warning, Jr, MD
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cc: Senate Majority Leader Sen. Jake Corman
Speaker of the House Rep. Mike Turzai