



June 11, 2007

Honorable Michael Burgess
U.S. House of Representatives
1224 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Burgess:

On behalf of the 25,000 members and 53 chapters of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), I write to express support for your legislative initiatives, H.R. 2583, the "Physician Workforce and Graduate Medical Education Enhancement Act of 2007," and H.R. 2584, the "High-Need Physician Workforce Incentives Act of 2007." As the nation's largest emergency medicine organization, we believe these bills will provide needed attention and support to an area that has been inadequately addressed to date.

The "Physician Workforce and Graduate Medical Education Enhancement Act of 2007" will establish an interest-free loan program for hospitals, which have not done so previously, to establish and conduct residency training programs in emergency medicine, among other specialties. These grants will assist hospitals in paying salaries for faculty and residents, as well as any other costs directly related to the residency training program.

Between 1995 and 2005, visits to emergency departments increased from 96.5 million to 115.3 million visits annually. This represents an average increase of more than 1.7 million visits per year. We must provide additional resources to ensure more emergency physicians are properly trained to handle this increasing demand, especially as "baby boomers" continue to age and utilize emergency department resources.

ACEP strongly believes that emergency medicine residency programs provide the best and only method of training future emergency physicians. Emergency medicine residency programs train physicians to evaluate and respond to individual patient crises, as well as man-made or natural disasters, on a 24-hour basis. Every American benefits from the availability of these services and with the enactment of H.R. 2583 emergency physicians will continue to provide emergency care when and where it is needed.

The "High-Need Physician Workforce Incentives Act of 2007" will empower HRSA to use grants to alleviate critical workforce shortages in emergency medicine. H.R. 2584 creates scholarship and loan programs for emergency physicians, and others, to provide medical services in high-need areas around the country. It is imperative that Congress create incentives to ensure board certified, residency trained emergency physicians will be available to all Americans and this legislation will help this nation achieve that goal.

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We applaud your efforts to create new emergency medicine residency programs and provide workforce incentives in high-need areas. We commend you and the many colleagues we hope will support these important measures and we stand prepared to do what we can to ensure they are enacted into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Keaton MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Keaton, MD, FACEP
President