

April 18, 2023

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Pallone:

On behalf of our 159,000 dentist members, the American Dental Association (ADA) would like to thank you for sponsoring H.R. 2569, the Doctors of Community Act (DOC Act). The ADA strongly supports efforts to increase the dental workforce, especially in underserved communities and populations, through support for new and expanded dental residency programs. We would also like to thank you, as Ranking Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, for including this bill in the Health Subcommittee's hearing on "Examining Existing Federal Programs to Build a Stronger Health Workforce and Improve Primary Care."

As you know, the DOC Act would permanently extend and expand the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program, which trains residents to serve some of our nation's most vulnerable populations in community-based settings such as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Rural Health Clinics, and tribal health centers. Permanent, dedicated funding would provide stability to teaching health centers and strengthen continuity of care in underserved communities.

The DOC Act would also direct critical funding to a program that has needed increased resources for years, allowing for the expansion of existing THCGME programs and the creation of many new THCGME programs and residency slots. The expansion would address general health workforce shortages and would also increase equity by addressing persistent disparities. Because 60 percent of THCGME training sites are in Medically Underserved Communities (MUCs), and research suggests that dentists and physicians are more likely to practice near the location of their training, this bill would likely increase access to care in MUCs and lead to better health outcomes among populations experiencing oral health disparities.

The ADA greatly appreciates your introduction of H.R. 2569 and your leadership on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Jennifer Fisher at (202)789-5160 or fisherj@ada.org.

Sincerely,

George R. Shepley, D.D.S.
President

Raymond A. Cohlmiya, D.D.S.
Executive Director

GRS:RAC:jf