



Medicare Residency Slots

Request: The Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY) urges the New York Congressional delegation to support legislation to increase the number of Medicare-supported residency slots.

Background: The 1997 Balanced Budget Act capped the number of residents for which hospitals could claim Medicare payment based on the residents employed at each hospital in 1996. The cap has remained at the 1996 level, even though the United States population has increased by 31 percent since then.

With the new health reform legislation, it is estimated that an additional 32 million Americans will have health insurance and will be eligible for medical care. This will add pressure to an already overburdened physician workforce. As such, many medical schools are increasing their class sizes and several new schools are opening. These additional students will need to be placed in residency positions to complete their training, creating the need for more Medicare residency slots to accommodate the increasing population of students graduating from medical schools.

In 2011, Congressmen Michael Grimm (R-NY), Joseph Crowley (D-NY), and Eliot Engel (D-NY) introduced a bill "Improving Physician Access in Teaching Hospitals (PATH) Act" that would address the need for additional residency slots, which has increased dramatically with the passage of health care reform. The Path Act legislation would phase in an additional 1,000 Medicare-supported graduate medical education (GME) training positions in each of three successive cost-reporting years.

Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL), Charles Schumer (D-NY), and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) introduced the "Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2011" (S. 1627), which would increase the number of residency positions that would be eligible for Medicare GME support. The legislation would increase the number of residency slots nationally by 3,000 each year from 2013 through 2017, for a total of 15,000 slots.

AMSNY believes that increasing the number of Medicare-supported GME slots is an important step towards addressing the growing workforce issues across the nation. With approximately 17 percent of the nation's physicians being trained in New York State each year, our academic medical centers and teaching hospitals are committed to training the next generation of physicians. AMSNY urges members of Congress to support efforts to expand the residency pool and strongly advocates for continued investment in medical education.