



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Indiana Physicians applaud lawmakers for continuing to fund medical training programs in State budget

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Physician Coalition applauded legislators from the Indiana House of Representatives for their work to continue funding critical medical training programs. Lawmakers from that chamber on Monday voted to approve House Bill 1001, which sets the State budget.

Members of the Indiana Senate will take up the budget during the second half of the 2021 legislative session beginning March 1.

The Indiana Physician Coalition is advocating to increase or maintain the \$8 million biennial appropriation over two years to the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Board to develop and sustain physician residency training programs throughout the state, including in rural and underserved areas.

Since the creation of the GME Board in 2015 by the Indiana General Assembly, more than 70 new resident physicians and 220 residency slots have been created. That adds up to an additional 126,000 direct primary care hours for patients.

“There’s no question that Indiana needs more physicians, and it’s an encouraging sign that our representatives in the House understand that need and are doing something about it,” said Roberto Darroca, MD, president of the Indiana State Medical Association, one of 12 groups that are leading the coalition. “With this funding, we can continue to increase the number of physicians practicing in Indiana whose rigorous education and training have prepared them best to meet the needs of our population.”

A new physician, either a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO), accumulates up to 16,000 clinical hours by the time they complete their training. It takes seven to 12 years of preparation for practice, including four years of medical school and three to eight years of residency and fellowship training in a medical or surgical specialty.

More than 2,000 in-state medical students are currently studying at Indiana University School of Medicine and at Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine. That includes nearly 500 fourth-year medical students who will find out this spring which residency program has accepted them to continue their training after graduation.

“While the vast majority of resident physicians who train in Indiana stay in Indiana, we still lose 133 graduating medical students to other states each year due to a shortage of in-state

residency programs,” said Carrie Davis, MD, past president and current board member of the Indiana Academy of Dermatology.

“That’s a loss for our medical students who have to leave the state, as well as a loss for the patients they could be treating and for our communities where they could have practiced.”

Dr. Davis cited the fact that 70% of physicians end up practicing in the area where they complete their residency training.

In addition, according to the coalition, every resident physician who becomes a primary care physician within an underserved area generates on average \$3.6 million in economic impact for the region. And their practice within the community puts more Hoosiers to work by creating an additional 6 to 7 jobs.

Statewide, the economic impact of current and new resident physicians from Indiana medical resident programs is expected to reach \$332 million by 2025. But only if such funding is maintained during the 2021 legislative session, said Dr. Davis.

“Clearly, the State’s efforts are working and the return on investment is tremendous, thanks to the work of our lawmakers to back this program with the funding that is needed,” said Derek Sprunger, MD, past president of the Indiana Academy of Ophthalmology. “Given our progress, we can’t lose momentum now, especially during a pandemic.”

Now that the bill has reached the Senate, Hoosier citizens and professionals from the medical community are encouraged to contact their senators and request to increase or maintain funding for medical residency training programs.

“In the grand scheme of things, it’s a small price to pay to provide Hoosiers with greater access to physician-led health care, and as a result, a better quality of life,” added Dr. Sprunger.

To learn more about the coalition, visit INphysicians.org.

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About Indiana Physician Coalition:

Indiana Physician Coalition is a statewide alliance of medical associations and specialty societies that advocates for physician-led health care to protect patients from harm, increase access to quality care and control health care spending. Visit us on the web at INphysicians.org and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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