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January 22, 2021

The Honorable Timothy Brown
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

The Honorable Ryan Mishler
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: 2021-2022 budget – Graduate Medical Education (GME) appropriation

Dear Chairman Brown and Chairman Mishler:

The undersigned physician organizations, which make up the Indiana Physician Coalition, are writing to request members of the Indiana General Assembly to maintain or increase the \$8 million biennial appropriation to the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Board.

Since the creation of the GME Board in 2015, more than 70 new resident physicians and 220 residency slots have been put to work throughout the state. That adds up to an additional 126,000 direct primary care hours for Hoosier patients who are in desperate need of the expertise and training of an Indiana physician.

And the ongoing pandemic has only made this situation more dire.

By increasing or maintaining the appropriation, Indiana can add to the highly trained physician workforce that is needed to improve health outcomes and provide greater access to care, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Both Indiana University and Marian University successfully attract hundreds of new medical students who begin their studies every fall only to be forced to leave the state upon graduation. In fact, Indiana loses 133 new physicians each year due to a lack of available residency programs. Because nearly 70% of doctors end up practicing medicine near the location of their residency, it is critical for many reasons that we continue to fund the GME Board.

In addition to improving Hoosier health, consider these economic factors as well: ¹

- Every resident physician who becomes a primary care physician within an underserved area generates a \$3.6 million economic impact upon that region.
- On average, every resident physician generates \$1.5 million each year they remain in a community to practice medicine.
- Each physician's practice within the community on average creates an additional 6-7 jobs.
- Statewide, the economic impact of current and planned new resident physicians from Indiana medical resident programs is expected to reach \$332 million by 2025.

Of great concern to everyone working in health care is the doctor shortage that is hampering efforts to improve Hoosier health. Together, we can reverse this trend by helping the GME Board meet its goal of expanding the number of physicians training in Indiana by more than 350 by 2024.

COVID-19 has only highlighted the dangers of an unhealthy population. Poor health has likely contributed to worse outcomes for the more than 600,000 positive cases that have filled our hospitals and medical offices. Having more highly trained physicians, offering preventive medical treatment, can help Indiana get on a path for better health in the years to come.

As the Indiana Physician Coalition, it is our mission to increase patient access to quality care. We ask you to join us in this mission by increasing or at least maintaining the current funding of residency programs through the GME Board.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our great state.

Sincerely,

Indiana Academy of Dermatology
Indiana Academy of Family Physicians
Indiana Academy of Ophthalmology
Indiana Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians
Indiana Chapter of the American College of Surgeons
Indiana Orthopaedic Society
Indiana Osteopathic Association
Indiana Psychiatric Society
Indiana Radiological Society
Indiana Society of Anesthesiologists
Indiana State Medical Association

¹ Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Graduate Medical Education Board, [2020 GMRP Handout](#)