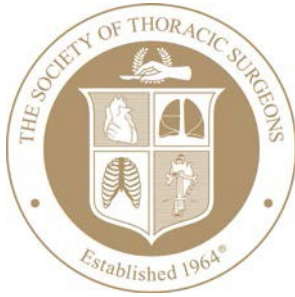


May 17, 2017



The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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Congressman Joseph Crowley
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Ryan Costello
326 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017

Dear Representative Crowley and Representative Costello:

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), I write to thank you for introducing the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2017 (HR 2267). Founded in 1964, STS is an international not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,000 cardiothoracic surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals in 90 countries who are dedicated to ensuring the best surgical care for patients with diseases of the heart, lungs, and other organs in the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

STS commends you for seeking to modernize graduate medical education funding in order to meet the needs of a growing and aging population. As you know, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 capped the number of residency positions that Medicare would support at the number of residents who were training in a given teaching hospital as of December 31, 1996. Since then, hospitals and other medical facilities have struggled to maintain—let alone expand—patient access to care. Your legislation is an important step towards addressing the massive projected workforce shortages that threaten the nation's health care system. According to the AAMC Center for Workforce Studies, there will be a shortage of over 46,000 surgeons and medical specialists in the next decade. This shortfall will affect everyone but the impact will be most severe on vulnerable and underserved populations, including the approximately 20 percent of Americans who live in rural or inner-city locations designated as health professional shortage areas.

STS remains fully committed to improving the quality, safety, and efficiency of care for all patients. Expanded federal support of medical residency positions is critical to training the physician workforce of the future. If you have any questions, please contact STS Director of Government Relations, Courtney Yohe at 202-787-1222 or cyohe@sts.org.

Sincerely,

Richard L Prager, MD
President