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May 12, 2009

The Honorable John Yarmuth
U.S. House of Representatives
435 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Yarmuth:

On behalf of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP), I am pleased to offer you our support for the "Graduate Medical Education Advancement Act" (H.R. 2301). This bill provides much needed reform to the graduate medical education (GME) system to ensure residency training programs have the needed resources to train our nation's next generation of physicians. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and are devoted to assisting you in seeing this legislation enacted into law.

Over the last decade, the population of our country has increased and grown older. Increasing access to health care coverage for all Americans is at the center of the health care reform debate. We must work to ensure that our nation's physician workforce is capable of meeting future increased demand. Central to achieving this is a strong GME system.

The current Medicare payment system in the United States neglects the value of didactic experiences, training opportunities in non-hospital settings, and voluntary physician supervision of medical residents within the GME system. The ACOFP is supportive of your efforts to create new training opportunities in non-hospital settings as well as those seeking to clarify existing regulations governing non-hospital training. Recent statistics associated with career choices of medical school graduates reveal the acute need to increase our nation's supply of family physicians. The ACOFP strongly believes that by providing experiences in non-hospital settings for resident physicians, especially those in primary care specialties, increases the likelihood that they will seek practice opportunities in those settings.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this important legislation. The ACOFP and our members stand ready to assist you in securing enactment of the provisions included in your legislation.

Respectfully,



Jan D. Zieren, DO, MPH, FACOFP *dist.*
President