

July 14, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and
Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chair, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nathan Deal
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Waxman and Pallone and Ranking Members Barton and Deal:

The undersigned organizations strongly object to provisions in the House tri-committee health care reform discussion draft requiring the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate graduate medical education (GME) training programs. Among other requirements, Section 1505 (b)(1)(B) & (b)(2) would instruct the GAO to assess faculty expertise; develop curricular requirements; and assess the accreditation processes of the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

As a profession, medicine and allied health professionals are committed to continuing to evaluate, identify, and reinforce the goals of health professional training already established by the ACGME, American Osteopathic Association's Council on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), Residency Review Committees, professional boards, and state licensure authorities in the interest of public health. We share the House of Representatives' interest in assuring a well-trained health workforce that is aligned with the needs of communities and an evolving health care system. We will continue to work with all members of Congress to ensure that health professions training and the broader health care delivery system meet the goals of improving the health of the nation.

The activities specified in 1505 fall far beyond the expertise and capabilities of the GAO and must remain the purview of educational programs and their accreditation bodies. Educational accreditation and curriculum design in the health professions is strongly integrated with requirements of pre-professional education; medical and other professional education; and licensure and certification. Intrusion of non-qualified governmental entities aimed at directing educational content and instruction is unlikely to benefit patients but may create unintended consequences such as violating express goals of states and certification bodies that are currently charged with assuring the public's health and maintaining standards of professional practice.

We strongly urge that the House health care reform discussion draft Section 1505 (b)(1)(B) & (b)(2) be removed from the final House health care reform legislation.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology Professional Association
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residence Training
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Board of Allergy and Immunology
American Board of Anesthesiology
American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery
American Board of Dermatology
American Board of Emergency Medicine
American Board of Family Medicine
American Board of Medical Genetics
American Board of Medical Specialties
American Board of Neurological Surgery
American Board of Nuclear Medicine
American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery
American Board of Otolaryngology
American Board of Pathology
American Board of Pediatrics
American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
American Board of Thoracic Surgery
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Radiology
American College of Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association

American Medical Association
American Orthopaedic Association
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
Association of Academic Physiatrists
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology
Child Neurology Society
College of American Pathologists
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Council of Medical Specialty Societies
Heart Rhythm Society
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Joint Council of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
Medical Group Management Association
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Vascular Surgery
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
Society of Neurological Surgeons
Society of Nuclear Medicine
The Endocrine Society
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

cc: Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor