



**Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA**, Executive Vice President, CEO

May 11, 2009

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
United States Senate  
716 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our support for S. 973, the "Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2009," which would redirect unfilled Medicare-supported graduate medical education (GME) positions and expand the number of Medicare-supported GME positions by 15 percent, with preference given to primary care, general surgery, non-hospital community based settings, as well as other areas of need.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 capped the number of resident physicians each teaching hospital could claim for reimbursement under Medicare. Medicare does not generally reimburse teaching hospitals for training residents beyond the capped number of GME slots. In 2007, the Council on Graduate Medical Education recommended removing the current cap on physician residency slots and increasing the number of funded GME slots by 15 percent to address physician shortages. Also, several studies confirm that the United States faces a physician shortage. Although medical schools are increasing their class sizes and several new allopathic medical schools and colleges of osteopathic medicine are scheduled to open within the next few years, Medicare-funded GME residency positions have not increased.

We believe that the "Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2009" plays an important role in addressing the projected physician shortage and ensuring access to care by increasing the number of GME positions, providing teaching hospitals with the flexibility to cover training in non-hospital settings, and allowing continued resident physician training in communities that face a teaching hospital closure to preserve ongoing residency training and access to care.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Maves". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA