



November 14, 2017

The Honorable Tim Schaffer
Chairman
Ohio State House Ways and Means Committee
77 S. High Street
11th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Schaffer:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Ohio Osteopathic Association (OOA) are writing in support of HB 317. This bill authorizes a personal income tax deduction for physicians who provide uncompensated medical services through a hospital, free clinic, or nongovernmental medical organization. The AOA and OOA support tax credits for physicians when the credit is tied to providing much needed care to underserved populations. We believe that HB 317 will help address current physician workforce shortages and work toward providing an adequate supply of physicians in underserved areas of Ohio in the future.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. OOA is a professional medical organization that represents the interests of the more than 5,000 DOs in Ohio.

The osteopathic medical profession:

- **Has long emphasized the importance of providing care to patients in rural and underserved areas, with a disproportionate amount of DOs providing services in these areas compared to other professionals.**
- **Comprises 11% of all US physicians but is responsible for 16% of patient visits in communities with populations of fewer than 2,500.¹**
- **Represents 40% of all physicians who are located in medically underserved areas or who treat medically underserved populations.²**
- Is committed to providing health care in rural Ohio communities, as reflected by the osteopathic medical school located in the state: the **Ohio University Heritage College**

¹ Osteopathic Medicine and Medical Education in Brief, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. Available at: <http://www.aacom.org/about/osteomed/Pages/default.aspx>.

² 2013 National Center for the Analysis of Healthcare Data's (NCAHD) Enhanced State Licensure.

of Osteopathic Medicine (OU-HCOM), which has campuses in Athens, Cleveland and Dublin. OU-HCOM emphasizes primary care, where the need for more doctors is most acute. Through 2014, nearly **half the school's 2,380 cumulative practicing graduates are in primary care**, and **58 percent stayed in Ohio** to practice.³

Ohio's current physician shortage:

- Currently, **"1.3 million Ohioans** have limited or no access to primary care. These individuals **reside in both rural and urban areas** and are **disproportionately from poor and/or minority populations.**"⁴
- **Twenty-four full counties** and **parts of an additional 36 counties** do not have a sufficient number of primary care physicians.⁵
- Additionally, **25% of Ohio's physicians are near retirement.**⁶

Providing a personal income tax deduction is an excellent incentive to attract physicians to provide patient care to underserved populations in Ohio, and ultimately increase the number of physicians in the state. **The AOA and OOA urge you to promote access to quality care for medically underserved populations by supporting HB 317.** Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Raine Richards, JD, Director, Public Policy at rrichards@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8199.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Baker, DO
President, AOA



Sean D. Stiltner, DO
President, OOA

CC: William S. Mayo, DO, President-elect, AOA
Joseph M. Yasso, Jr., DO, Chair, Department of Governmental Affairs, AOA
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Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, Chief Executive Officer, AOA
Raine Richards, JD, Director, Public Policy, AOA
Jon F. Wills, Executive Director, OOA

³ Ghose, Carrie. "Ohio's Largest Incoming Medical School Class is Not at Ohio State." *Columbus Business First*, July 6, 2015. Available at: <https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2015/07/06/ohios-largest-incoming-medical-school-class-is-not.html>.

⁴ No author. "Ohio Statewide Primary Care Needs Assessment." *Ohio Department of Health*, 2015 - 2016. Available at: <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/-/media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/chss/Primary-Care-Office/PCO-Needs-Assessment-2015---2016.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ No author. "The Aging Physician Workforce: A Demographic Dilemma." *Merritt Hawkins*, 2015. Available at: https://www.merrithawkins.com/uploadedFiles/mhawwhitepaper_aging.pdf.