



November 13, 2019

The Honorable Nydia Velázquez
Chairwoman
Small Business Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steven Chabot
Ranking Member
Small Business Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Velázquez and Ranking Member Chabot:

Thank you for holding a hearing on “Upskilling the Medical Workforce: Opportunities in Health Innovation.” The Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) appreciates the opportunity to share its thoughts with you on this important issue.

HLC is a coalition of chief executives from all disciplines within American healthcare. It is the exclusive forum for the nation’s healthcare leaders to jointly develop policies, plans, and programs to achieve their vision of a 21st century healthcare system that makes affordable high-quality care accessible to all Americans. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, laboratories, biotech firms, health product distributors, post-acute care providers, home care providers, and information technology companies – advocate for measures to increase the quality and efficiency of healthcare through a patient-centered approach.

As you know, America faces a physician shortage upwards of 100,000 physicians by 2030, which could disproportionately affect rural and underserved communities. This will be detrimental to the care and well being of Americans across the United States. To ensure that physicians have the training they need, Congress should increase funding for Graduate Medical Education (GME) and increase the number of residency positions in both primary and specialty care. HLC urges Congress to pass the Resident Physician Shortage Act, which would increase the number of GME slots by 15,000 total or 3,000 per year. Additionally, Congress should pass the Advancing Medical Resident Training in Community Hospitals Act, which would raise the GME caps for hospitals that have inadvertently and unknowingly established medical resident training programs with

artificially low levels. Legislation such as the Opioid Workforce Act that would increase the number of GME positions in addiction medicine should also be approved by Congress.

Beyond training more physicians, opportunities in innovative healthcare practices offers another method to proactively address the shortage. HLC believes telemedicine and mobile health offer solutions for rural providers and underserved communities. Telemedicine offers providers a way to serve their patients at lower costs and helps reduce the time it takes patients to receive care—particularly specialty care. Telehealth lessens isolation and provides support to the rural health workforce while addressing provider shortages. Additionally, there are barriers such as restrictive reimbursement and regulatory policies that make it challenging to utilize telehealth. HLC urges Congress to support S. 773, the “Telehealth Innovation and Improvement Act” which would allow providers to test telehealth delivery models without regard to the limitations on the type of service provided, geographic areas or location of the patient.

Thank you for the Committee’s work on improving workforce shortages in America. HLC looks forward to continuing to collaborate with you on our shared priorities. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Debbie Witchey at (202) 449-3435 or dwitchey@hlc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary R. Grealy".

Mary R. Grealy
President