

June 23, 2009

The Honorable Bruce Braley
1019 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zack Space
315 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representatives Braley and Space:

The undersigned organizations applaud you for your introduction of HR 2891, the “Access to Front Line Health Care Act of 2009”. Our nation is facing a health care workforce shortage and is not meeting the needs of patients in underserved areas. Your legislation recognizes that need and attempts to provide these communities with the providers that are on the “frontlines” of care. This bill provides the appropriate incentives that would lead to the growth in frontline healthcare services provided in our nations medically underserved communities, thus enhancing our ability to meet the needs of these patients.

The “Access to Frontline Health Care Act” would offer loan repayments that would relieve some of the staggering debt burden faced by many health professionals. This assistance would allow these individuals who are motivated to care for underserved communities to enter and complete health professions training that might otherwise be unaffordable to them. The assistance would free them to take a career path that may be less lucrative, but more satisfying.

Your legislation would help to provide desperately needed health care in areas where health care providers are in short supply. By identifying basic services that are in high demand for underserved communities, these frontline shortage areas will attract health care professionals that are dedicated to serving these populations in need. Communities identified as “frontline shortage areas” will gain access to needed health care services that could continue after the minimum time commitment has ended.

These organizations and the members they represent thank you for your leadership on this very important issue. We look forward to working with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Audiology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology
American Chiropractic Association
American College of Surgeons
American Dietetic Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Optometric Association
American Pharmacists Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Podiatric Medical Association
American Speech Language Hearing Association
National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies
National Community Pharmacists Association