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Re: Senate Bill 788

February 24, 2020

Dear Senator Eckardt:

I agree with statements by others that we have a substantial shortage of primary care providers in underserved areas of Maryland, including physicians and advanced level practitioners. Several recent studies of Maryland healthcare workforce adequacy document these shortages. These have persisted despite efforts by our health professions schools to produce more graduates who enter primary care. This shortage perpetuates the known disparities in healthcare as summarized by Dr. Colgan.

Access to primary care, including general pediatrics, family practice, general internal medicine, and geriatrics, is associated with lower costs and better health outcomes. Studies have shown that a major factor influencing the decision to enter a primary care specialty is the ability to work with community faculty role models who are happy, engaged and committed to care of their patients. As the Assistant Dean of Part-time and Community Faculty at Hopkins, and director of Hopkins' primary care clerkships over the last 20 years, I can attest that finding and retaining community preceptors is very challenging. We know that clinicians are more likely to remain active teachers, over time, when there is financial recognition for their time and work. I can also attest that our schools continue to struggle keeping community faculty engaged, and that teachers have qualified for the incentive, despite many hours of voluntary work.

The change in hours will align this incentive with the number of actual hours that students spend in primary care rotations. They will support recruiting and retention of new faculty in health professions shortage areas, where challenges are significant. The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine is grateful to the legislature for considering these minor changes to the bill so that more preceptors may take advantage of this tax credit. Likewise, colleagues in the Maryland Chapter of American College of Physicians, and the Part-time Faculty at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, strongly support this amendment.

I believe that this will help us engage and retain more primary care providers in the highest need areas in our state, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "maur McGuire m.d." in a cursive script.

Maura McGuire, M.D., F.A.C.P.