



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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## **AMA Physicians, Medical Students Urge Congress: Retain Funding for Residency Programs, Increase Training Positions to Address Doctor Shortage**

*Medical student advocacy day, new website part of campaign to protect graduate medical education*

WASHINGTON, February 4, 2013 – Physicians and medical students from across the country are urging Congress to retain Medicare funding for graduate medical education (GME) programs, known as residencies, and to lift the cap on the number of available residency slots. As the nation deals with a physician shortage, it is **important** that all medical students can complete their training and care for patients.

“Residency training gives new physicians hands-on experience and provides high-quality care to patients,” said AMA President Jeremy Lazarus, M.D. “Limiting the slots available to train physicians as they leave medical school creates a bottleneck in the system and prevents the physician workforce from growing to meet the needs of our nation’s patients.”

The demand for physicians will grow as the US population continues to age, 30 million newly-insured Americans have increased access to health care services from the Affordable Care Act and life expectancies become longer.

Medical schools are expanding enrollment and making changes to prepare students for the future practice of medicine, and the AMA has **announced** a \$10 million initiative to further accelerate change in undergraduate medical education. But that is just part of the continuum of medical education essential to produce physicians ready to meet future demands. The number of GME slots has been frozen by the federal government since 1997. As a result, U.S. medical school graduates will exceed the number of available slots as soon as 2015.

“Medical students, patients and physicians who are concerned about protecting GME slots to reduce the physician shortage can contact their elected officials through a new website, [www.SaveGME.org](http://www.SaveGME.org),” said Dr. Lazarus. “Medical students will also be carrying this important message to Congress during their advocacy day on Capitol Hill on February 11. The timing is especially critical as Medicare budget cuts from sequestration could have an impact on funding for graduate medical education.”