



Association for Molecular Pathology
Promoting Clinical Practice, Basic Research, and Education in Molecular Pathology

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September 20, 2011

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee
on Deficit Reduction
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Co-Chair, Joint Select Committee
on Deficit Reduction
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hensarling and Chairwoman Murray:

The Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP), an international medical and professional association representing over 2,000 physician and scientist specialists in genomic medicine, respectfully urges you to explore fiscally responsible ways to sustain funding for graduate medical education (GME) and opposes any cuts to this vital funding.

AMP recognizes the unique opportunity with the creation of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to identify and explore areas to address the challenges of the deficit. However, we ask that you strongly consider the importance of physician training, including training in genomic medicine, for our health care system. Advances in genomics and innovation in diagnostics are revolutionizing health care. Physician experts in genomic medicine translate new discoveries to the clinical setting for preventative health services and for disease management. Cutting GME funding could dramatically curtail patients' access to these lifesaving medical services. This is particularly critical as a large segment of the population enters their senior years. The promise of genomic medicine is improved outcomes – a healthier America is ultimately the most cost-effective solution.

As you know, Medicare provides the principle funding for the training of medical residents, and reducing this funding in any way will have a detrimental impact on hospitals with teaching programs for physician residents and on those who rely on them for care. These programs currently receive approximately \$9.5 billion annually to fund residency programs. The number of residency slots is already insufficient and cutting this funding would result in still fewer future physicians being trained and fewer patients having access to adequate medical care in the future.

As Congress and the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction continue their work, AMP hopes to collaborate with you to find an economically responsible way to reduce our nation's deficit while maintaining support for physician training and education. AMP believes decreasing funding for GME would further exacerbate physician shortages, hamper the translation of discoveries into the clinic, and limit patient access to innovative care. As such, AMP strongly urges the Committee to sustain the current funding levels for GME.

Thank you for your attention and please do not hesitate to reach out to me or AMP if we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. O'Leary, MD, PhD
President