
August 13, 2019

The Honorable Charles Grassley
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Abby Finkenauer
United State House of Representatives
124 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Loebsack
United State House of Representatives
1211 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cindy Axne
United State House of Representatives
330 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve King
United State House of Representatives
2210 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Members of Iowa's Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the more than 6,000 physician, resident, and medical student members of the Iowa Medical Society, it is my pleasure to reiterate our strong support for S.948 and H.R. 2895 – the Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act. This legislation is a top priority for the Iowa Medical Society as we seek to continue our state's proud tradition of providing high-quality, accessible healthcare.

As you know, Iowa faces a significant physician workforce shortage. The most recent data from the American Association of Medical Colleges ranks our state 43rd in the nation for the number of physicians per capita and lower still in many critical specialty areas. As the population of Iowa continues to age, demand for medical services continues to grow. Especially in rural communities, patients often struggle to access care in a timely and convenient manner. Multiple studies have demonstrated the health, economic, and access disparities facing rural Americans.

Since its inception in 1994, the Conrad 30 program, with its focus on recruiting physicians to serve in medically underserved areas, has proven to be a critical component in helping to address these disparities. It is a vital component in Iowa's overall efforts to recruit the next generation of physicians. Unfortunately, restrictions in the current structure of the program have prevented it from making a larger impact in our state. In recent years, Iowa practices have had to turn away physicians in much needed specialties like psychiatry, simply because the Conrad 30 program has proven so popular that we have more qualified applicants than slots available. With our state in dire need of increased behavioral

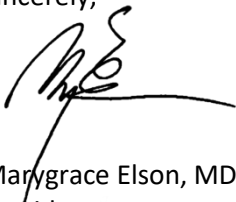
health services, no qualified psychiatrist looking to practice in an underserved community should *ever* be turned away.

The Iowa Medical Society is committed to a wholistic approach to recruiting and training more physicians. While the lengthy nature of medical education means that many efforts to increase access will take time for their impact to be felt, the Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act offers an immediate step that can make a difference. The additional program flexibility that is made possible by this legislation will help bring more qualified physicians to rural and underserved communities where they can make the greatest impact.

IMS has had conversations with many of you who have already voiced strong support for this legislation. We thank you for that support; we especially thank Senator Ernst and Congresswoman Finkenauer for cosponsoring the legislation in your respective chambers. The continued leadership of Iowa's Congressional Delegation on this important issue is greatly appreciated. We urge you to do what you can to quickly move the legislation to final passage following the August recess. IMS stands ready to assist your efforts in any way.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ME', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Marygrace Elson, MD, MME, FACOG
President