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PAFP applauds release of report on medical student choice in primary care; highlights need for increased investment in primary care

(HARRISBURG, Pa. Dec. 13, 2021) The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP), today, recognized the work of the Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) in response to House Resolution 625 of 2020 that called for an examination of medical student choice in primary care within Pennsylvania’s nine medical schools. (Pennsylvania is home to seven allopathic and two osteopathic medical schools.)

H.R. 625 builds on a 2015 report on physician shortages that called for attention to pipeline programming to address the growing health care needs of Pennsylvanians, the worsening physician shortage, and the health disparities that exist throughout the state.

“Throughout the Commonwealth, our medical education institutions are committed to advancing community and population health,” PAFP President Tiffany Leonard, MD, said, “and it is critical that they have an accurate pulse on the percentage of students entering and remaining in primary care and that they promote the undergraduate and graduate training of a workforce that the population needs and wants.”

Among other recommendations, the JSGC Report calls for greater investment in and expansion of the state’s existing primary care pipeline programs, which aligns with the PAFP’s work to advance the specialty of family medicine within the Commonwealth. Most notably, the PAFP administers the Family Medicine Residency Expansion program – funded in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health – that has supported nine new residency positions per year since 2014 in four family medicine residency training programs that serve rural and urban underserved communities.

The impact of investment in family medicine is quantifiable; each of the residents supported by the grant program provide nearly 2,000 patient visits and 117 newborn deliveries over the three-year course of their training.

“The information contained in this report has placed Pennsylvania’s robust medical education infrastructure in a position to make meaningful impacts on Pennsylvania’s primary care physician workforce and, by extension, improve health outcomes and health equity for all Pennsylvanians,” Dr. Leonard explained. “We look forward to partnering with the General Assembly and medical schools in new and innovative ways to meet those needs. Furthermore, we thank Rep. Paul Schemel for sponsoring H.R. 625 and the JSGC for providing such a thorough report.”

The JSGC report *Medical School Impact on the Primary Care Physician Shortage in Pennsylvania* is available [here](#).

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The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and its Foundation is a physician-led organization committed to advancing quality health care through advocacy, education, workforce development and commitment to the patients we serve. For over 70 years and with more than 6,000 physician, resident and student members, the Academy and its Foundation's core values are visionary leadership, integrity, and community.