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FLORIDA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Sandra B. Mortham, *EVP & CEO*

July 30, 2019

Carolyn K. Roberts, Chairwoman
Florida Board of Governors
State University System of Florida
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1614
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Madam Chair:

Thank you for giving the Florida Medical Association the opportunity to provide the Florida Board of Governors with some thoughts we have regarding whether or not more medical schools should be opened in Florida. Below are some issues we believe should be considered:

- We do not have adequate physician workforce data to know if Florida needs additional medical school graduates beyond the increased numbers that will occur as a result of expanding the enrollment at the existing schools.
- With the current expansion, including the two osteopathic schools in the state, Florida will be producing approximately 900 graduates per year within the next four years.
- Additional expansion is planned at the four allopathic schools over the next four years, so the number of graduates will rise in the future.
- A more urgent problem than new schools is the issue of limited residency positions for the current and future graduates. If more residency positions are not developed in Florida we will lose a large number, perhaps a majority, of our graduates to other states.
- Currently, more than 50% of graduates from our allopathic schools go out of state for residency training because of the limited positions here. As you know, most physicians establish practice in close proximity to their residency program. As the number of graduates grows, more and more will leave and not return.
- New schools will not help us address the need for more physicians if their graduates must leave the state for graduate medical education.
- We need more residency positions much more than we need new schools. If medical residencies were expanded then perhaps new schools would become an option for increasing the physician workforce in our state.

We also believe the following questions should also be considered:

(1) Do we need to train more medical students? If so, how many? Complicating an already confusing picture is the greater issue of specialty mix and supply of generalist physicians. There is an increasing trend toward students choosing specialties such as radiology, ophthalmology, anesthesiology, dermatology and emergency medicine while family practice, general internal medicine, ob-gyn and general surgery have suffered double digit decreases in demand. Increasing medical student capacity does not necessarily increase generalist physicians.

(2) Are there enough qualified applicants in Florida to accommodate more spots? In an AAMC survey of 2005 authored by Edward Salsberg and Hisashi Yamagata, of 118 medical schools and 12 osteopathic schools, 83% of southern medical and osteopathic schools admitted that they would be “concerned” about the adequacy of the applicant pool if enrollments were increased by more than 30%. Using 2004 data, there were 818 Florida

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students who met “minimum requirements” of a 3.0 GPA and MCAT of 24. Given the flattening of interest in medical education, the number of slots available may exceed the number of minimally qualified applicants.

(3) Will increasing numbers of medical students improve physician workforce without an increased number of GME slots? The CEPRI report adequately articulates the importance of GME numbers in improving physician workforce and the fact that “the location of a physician’s residency training is a better indicator of where a physician will practice than the location of a physician’s medical school.” New residency programs require both ACGME approval for the educational entity and CMS funding for the hospital entity.

(4) How can we improve the quality of medical education and academic health centers in the state of Florida? According to the AAMC database of 2005, medical school rankings in the state of Florida (based on NIH funding) reveal the following:

University of Miami 43

University of Florida 56

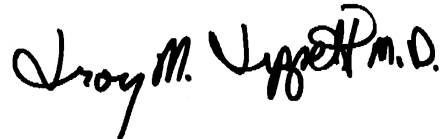
University of South Florida 79

Florida State University Not Ranked

One of the goals we all share beyond increasing capacity is improving the national stature of current Florida medical schools. There is significant data that reveals that medical schools require a number of years to mature and provide a return on investment.

The expansion of medical school capacity should be pursued only after policies to immediately address a physician shortage have been implemented. When expansion of medical school capacity is pursued, the options of expanding existing medical school capacity, establishing regional partnerships, and establishing new medical schools should be prioritized based on cost-efficiency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Troy M. Tippet M.D." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Troy M. Tippet, M.D.
President, Florida Medical Association