

1 State of Arkansas
2 93rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2021

SCR 14

4
5 By: Senator Irvin
6 By: Representative L. Johnson

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8 **SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

9 TO ENCOURAGE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO PASS THE
10 RESIDENT PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE REDUCTION ACT OF 2021 TO
11 REFORM THE NATION'S MEDICARE-SUPPORTED GRADUATE
12 MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND TO PROVIDE RURAL
13 STATES AND RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH ADDITIONAL
14 RESOURCES TO MEET THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF
15 THE FUTURE.

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18 **Subtitle**

19 TO ENCOURAGE CONGRESS TO PASS THE
20 RESIDENT PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE REDUCTION ACT
21 OF 2021 TO REFORM MEDICARE-SUPPORTED
22 GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND
23 TO PROVIDE RURAL STATES AND COMMUNITIES
24 WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

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26 WHEREAS, the United States is facing a physician shortage of up to one
27 hundred thirty-nine thousand (139,000) physicians by the year 2033 due to a
28 growing and aging population; and

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30 WHEREAS, physicians are the backbone of our nation's healthcare system,
31 and an adequate supply of trained physicians is critical to meeting the
32 healthcare needs of Arkansans today and in the future; and

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34 WHEREAS, a consensus exists that the State of Arkansas will require
35 more trained physicians than will be available and, as of 2019, was ranked
36 forty-seventh in the nation for active physicians per one hundred thousand



1 (100,000) population; and

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3 WHEREAS, it is projected that the State of Arkansas will need nearly
4 five hundred (500) additional primary care physicians and a sizable increase
5 in the number of cancer, cardiology, neurology, obstetrics and gynecology,
6 pediatric, and other specialists by the year 2030; and

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8 WHEREAS, physicians are vital for the foundation of the nation's
9 healthcare system, and an adequate supply of trained physicians is critical
10 to meeting the healthcare needs of Arkansas citizens now and in the future;
11 and

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13 WHEREAS, Arkansas medical schools are currently training more graduates
14 than existing available residency positions; and

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16 WHEREAS, in an Association of American Medical Colleges "2019 State
17 Physician Workforce Data Report", Arkansas ranked fourth in the nation for
18 retaining physicians who completed medical school and residency training in
19 the state behind Hawaii, California, and Texas; and

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21 WHEREAS, approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the public funding
22 to support graduate medical education is provided by the Medicare program;
23 and

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25 WHEREAS, Medicare-supported residency positions have been capped since
26 1997, resulting in an unequal distribution of federally supported residency
27 slots to rural states, which disproportionately affects growing states,
28 including Arkansas; and

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30 WHEREAS, Senator John Boozman served as a lead sponsor for the Resident
31 Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2019 to lift the cap on Medicare-
32 supported residency slots; and

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34 WHEREAS, in 2019, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
35 worked with Senator Boozman to convene a Graduate Medical Education Summit to
36 study the pressing need to increase the number of residency slots in

1 Arkansas; and

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3 WHEREAS, the Graduate Medical Education Summit discussion, led by
4 Senator Boozman, included presentations and attendance from the Association
5 of American Medical Colleges, the Veterans Health System of the Ozarks,
6 Community Health Centers of Arkansas, Arkansas medical schools, the Northwest
7 Arkansas Council, the Arkansas Hospital Association, chief executive officers
8 of hospitals in this state, corporate leaders, the Arkansas State Chamber of
9 Commerce, medical students, municipal and county leaders, and members of the
10 Arkansas General Assembly; and

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12 WHEREAS, in December 2020, Congress passed the Consolidated
13 Appropriations Act, 2021, which provided one thousand (1,000) new Medicare-
14 supported graduate medical education residency slots, and served as the first
15 increase in Medicare-supported graduate medical education residency slots in
16 nearly twenty-five (25) years; and

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18 WHEREAS, Senator John Boozman, Senator Tom Cotton, Congressman Steve
19 Womack, Congressman French Hill, Congressman Bruce Westerman, and Congressman
20 Rick Crawford voted for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, to address
21 Rural Training Track programs, increase collaboration between rural and urban
22 teaching hospitals so that residents can gain experience providing care in
23 rural communities, and make adjustments to address artificially low Medicare
24 caps and per-resident amounts that limit residency training in some
25 hospitals; and

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27 WHEREAS, in March 2021, Senator John Boozman helped introduce the
28 Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021 to provide fourteen
29 thousand (14,000) new Medicare graduate medical education slots over seven
30 (7) years; and

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32 WHEREAS, the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2021 would
33 continue to prioritize residency slots for teaching hospitals in rural areas,
34 hospitals training over their current graduate medical education caps,
35 hospitals in states with new medical schools or new branch campuses, and
36 hospitals that serve areas designated as health professional shortage areas;

1 and

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3 WHEREAS, Arkansas will continue to face shortfalls in the number of
4 physicians needed to meet demand for healthcare services in the future
5 despite the efforts of Arkansas medical schools and hospitals to expand
6 graduate medical education; and

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8 WHEREAS, the General Assembly affirms that the current cap on Medicare
9 graduate medical education funding for existing teaching hospitals plays a
10 major role in slowing the expansion of graduate medical education efforts
11 across the country and in Arkansas; and

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13 WHEREAS, action by the United States Congress is necessary to resolve
14 the issue of resident training in a manner that will allow the states and the
15 nation to meet their citizens' healthcare needs and build a strong foundation
16 for businesses, hospitals, and the economy of the state,

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18 NOW, THEREFORE,

19 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
20 STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

21 THAT the members of this body urge the United States Congress to pass
22 legislation increasing federal support for graduate medical education.

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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of this resolution, an appropriate
25 copy be provided by the Secretary of the Senate to each member of the
26 Arkansas congressional delegation, the Secretary of the United States Senate,
27 the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and Governor Asa
28 Hutchinson.

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