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November 2, 2017

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Senator Bill Nelson

U.S. Senate

716 Senate Hart Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

On behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the national medical specialty society representing more than 37,000 psychiatric physicians nationwide, we are writing in support of a bill you introduced earlier this year, the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act (S. 1301).

As you know, our health care system is facing a shortage of physicians. Over the next several years, physician demand will continue to outpace the supply of physicians in clinical practice. By some estimates, the projected total shortfall of physicians will be anywhere from 40,800 to 104,900 by the year 2030.¹ This shortage is especially felt amongst psychiatrists and primary care practitioners, which are expected to experience a shortfall numbering in the thousands in only a few short years.² With 56.7 percent of psychiatrists at least age fifty-five³, and the process to fully train and license a physician requiring at least ten years of study and practice, action is needed now to ensure a steady supply of physicians and psychiatrists in the near future.

A lack of residency positions available to medical school graduates is a major contributor to this problem. We appreciate that your bill not only increases the total amount of residency positions, but also reserves half of them for specialties—such as primary care and psychiatry—where the need for more physicians is greatest.

In summary, we believe the Resident Physician Shortage Act will have a positive impact on the supply of psychiatrists trained to provide quality mental health and substance use disorder services. Please let us know how we can be a partner in advancing this bill. If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Mild, Interim Chief of Government Relations, at amild@psych.org, or at (703) 907-8645.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A." in a cursive style.

Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A.
CEO and Medical Director

¹ Association of American Medical Colleges, [2017 Update: The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections from 2015 to 2030](https://aamc-black.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/c9/db/c9dbegde-aabf-457f-ae7-1d3d554ff281/aamc_projections_update_2017_final_-_june_12.pdf) (Feb. 28, 2017), available at: https://aamc-black.global.ssl.fastly.net/production/media/filer_public/c9/db/c9dbegde-aabf-457f-ae7-1d3d554ff281/aamc_projections_update_2017_final_-_june_12.pdf.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, [The Physician Workforce: Projections and Research into Current Issues Affecting Supply and Demand](https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bhw/nchwa/projections/physiciansupplyissues.pdf) (Dec. 2008), available at: <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bhw/nchwa/projections/physiciansupplyissues.pdf>

³ Mark Olsson, [Building The Mental Health Workforce Capacity Needed To Treat Adults With Serious Mental Illnesses](#), *Health Affairs* 35, no.6 (2016), at 984.