

October 2, 2025

The Honorable Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Joyce, M.D.
U.S. House of Representatives
152 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
U.S. Senate
425 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Deborah Ross
U.S. House of Representatives
1221 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Specialty Physicians Advancing Rural Care (SPARC) Act. (S. 1380/ H.R. 4681)

Dear Senators Rosen and Wicker and Representatives Joyce and Ross:

On behalf of the thirty-eight undersigned physician organizations, we offer our robust support for the Specialty Physicians Advancing Rural Care (SPARC) Act. (S. 1380/ H.R. 4681). This bipartisan legislation would establish a new loan repayment program to incentivize specialty physicians to practice in rural communities and expand access for the millions of Americans who lack ready access to specialists.

The demand for specialty physicians throughout the United States far outpaces supply, especially in rural America. The country faces a shortage of 86,000 physicians by 2036 with an expected shortfall of 44,900 specialists.¹ According to the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, no specialty currently has enough practitioners to meet patients' needs in non-metropolitan areas.² This shortfall is growing. By 2037, non-metropolitan areas will experience a 60 percent shortage of physicians; by comparison, metropolitan areas will experience a 10 percent shortage.³ Predicted shortages for specialists in non-metropolitan areas range from 94 percent for neonatologists to 48 percent for emergency medicine physicians.⁴

While the availability of specialty medicine physicians is decreasing, the average amount of debt they carry is increasing. Sixty-seven percent of medical school graduates have medical school debt, with a median amount of \$200,000.⁵ These factors make it crucial that Congress take action to help reduce the financial burden on young physicians and incentivize them to practice in those areas of the country with the highest need.

¹ American Academy of Medical Colleges, *The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand Projections From 2021 to 2036*. Retrieved September 8, 2025, from <https://www.aamc.org/media/75236/download?attachment>.

² National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. *Health Workforce Projections Dashboard*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources & Services Administration. Retrieved June 3, 2025 from <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/workforce-projections>.

³ National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. *Health Workforce Projections*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources & Services Administration. Retrieved June 3, 2025, from <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/data-research/projecting-health-workforce-supply-demand>.

⁴ National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. *Health Workforce Projections Dashboard*. Retrieved June 3, 2025 from <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/workforce-projections>.

⁵ Association of American Medical Colleges. *Medical Student Education: Debt Costs, and Loan Repayment Fact Card for the Class of 2024*. Retrieved June 3, 2025 from <https://students-residents.aamc.org/media/12846/download>.

The SPARC Act would authorize repayment of student loans for specialty medicine physicians and nonphysician specialty providers of up to \$250,000 over six years in exchange for their service in rural communities experiencing shortages of specialty providers. This substantial time period will encourage these professionals to settle and grow roots in these communities, thereby fostering stable access to care.

We look forward to working with you and congressional leadership to advance and pass the SPARC Act during this 119th Congress.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Sleep Medicine
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American College of Cardiology
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Gastroenterology
American College of Mohs Surgery
American College of Radiology
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Gastroenterological Association
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Dermatologic Surgery
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society for Surgery of the Hand
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Breast Surgeons
American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery
American Society of Echocardiography
American Society of Nephrology
American Urological Association
ASTRO, the American Society for Radiation Oncology
College of American Pathologists
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Endocrine Society
Healthcare Business Management Association
National Association of Spine Specialists
Renal Physicians Association
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions
Society for Vascular Surgery

Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)

Society of Gynecologic Oncology

Society of Interventional Radiology

Society of Thoracic Surgeons