

April 4, 2011

The Honorable Bruce Braley  
1019 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Braley:

The undersigned organizations applaud you for your introduction of H.R. 531, the “Access to Frontline Health Care Act of 2011”. Our nation is facing a health care workforce shortage and is not meeting the needs of patients in underserved areas. With the implementation of health care reform and the millions of new patients that will be covered, this shortage will be even more difficult to overcome. Your legislation recognizes that need and attempts to provide these communities with the providers that are on the “frontlines” of care. This bill provides the appropriate incentives that would lead to the growth in frontline healthcare services provided in our nation’s medically underserved communities, thus enhancing our ability to meet the needs of these patients.

The “Access to Frontline Health Care Act” would offer loan repayments that would relieve some of the staggering debt burden faced by many health professionals. This assistance would allow these individuals who are motivated to care for underserved communities to enter and complete health professions training that might otherwise be unaffordable to them. The assistance would free them to take a career path that may be less lucrative, but more satisfying.

Your legislation would help to provide desperately needed health care in areas where health care providers are in short supply. By identifying basic services that are in high demand for underserved communities, these frontline shortage areas will attract health care professionals that are dedicated to serving these populations in need. Communities identified as “frontline shortage areas” will gain access to needed health care services that could continue after the minimum time commitment has ended.

These organizations and the members they represent thank you for your leadership on this very important issue. We look forward to working with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Audiology  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery  
American Chiropractic Association  
American College of Surgeons  
American Dietetic Association  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Optometric Association  
American Physical Therapy Association  
American Podiatric Medical Association  
American Speech Language Hearing Association  
National Association of Rehabilitation Providers and Agencies  
National Community Pharmacists Association