

PA Chapter Supports Student Loan Forgiveness Bill

Pennsylvania State Representative Josh Shapiro (D-Montgomery) introduced a student loan repayment bill that he hope will stem the tide of the medical brain drain in Pennsylvania and ensure continue access to the state's aging population.

House Bill (HB) 1093, "The Physician Retention Loan Forgiveness Act" would:

- "Forgive a doctor's medical school loans if the physician agrees to practice in Pennsylvania for at least 10 years after graduating medical school.
- The state would repay the loans to the medical school directly at 10 percent a year for 10 years.
- If the doctors left the profession or the state before the 10 years was up, they would have to reimburse the state for the amount paid up to that time.
- Priority would be given to doctors who work in an area declared by the state Health Department to be medically underserved, or having a shortage if primary care professionals.

Rep. Shapiro said that Pennsylvania has only 8 percent of its medical resident graduates that remains and practice in the state compared to 50 percent a decade ago. Only 3 percentage of the Pennsylvania doctors are younger that 35.

The cost of the program is estimated at \$13 million in state tax dollars to operate in its first year and could eventually reach \$40 million a year.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College Physicians played a key role in the introduction of the bill. Representatives from the Pennsylvania chapter and other medical professions attended the press conference to show support for the bill. Pennsylvania chapter members have sent over 900 emails to state representatives, urging support.

Attached are one of the news stories from last Monday's press conference, a photo of PA chapter members at the conference, a list of speakers (with strong support from PA Chapter of the ACP), and a copy of Rep. Shapiro's earlier press release

To access the bill, click here:

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&sesYr=2007&sessInd=0&billBody=H&billTyp=B&billNbr=1093&pn=1324>

June 8, 2007