February 2, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to urge Congress to take immediate action to pass into law appropriations and reauthorize long-term funding for several expired essential health care programs and provide permanent legal status to “Dreamers”. ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States, representing 152,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

On February 8, 2018, the fourth continuing resolution expires and with it temporary appropriations for vital programs such as Title VII health professions training and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, among many others. In addition, short-term funding for the National Health Service Corps, Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program and Community Health Centers ceases at the end of March. All of these programs have suffered the consequences of lurching from one stopgap spending patch to another, lacking the needed stability of long-term funding and endangering physician training, health-services research and patients in underserved communities. It is imperative that Congress reach bipartisan agreement to pass spending laws and reauthorize funding for these and other essential health programs without further delay.

ACP also urges you to raise the discretionary spending-caps for defense and non-defense on an equal basis for at least two fiscal years, so that Congress can swiftly pass into law the fiscal year 2018 appropriations bills and begin work on the fiscal year 2019 spending bills that provide necessary and sufficient funding for primary care training, medical and health services research, opioids disorder prevention and treatment, and other priorities.
Lastly, Congress must act quickly to ensure that individuals with deferred action for childhood arrival (DACA) status, including the dozens of them who are enrolled in U.S. medical schools or physician residency programs, can remain in the United States and are offered a path to permanent legal status and U.S. citizenship. If Congress fails to act by March 5, 2018, DACA recipients would lose their legal status, their ability to continue their studies or employment, and could face deportation.

Therefore we ask that you work with all possible speed to reach agreement to reauthorize and fund these essential health programs and provide permanent legal status to “Dreamers” in the next funding bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jack Ende, MD, MACP
President

CC: Members of the United States Senate and United States House of Representatives