



November 22, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Murray, and Vice Chair Collins:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to request the inclusion of funding for several important health care programs in a final Fiscal Year 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill. As you work to reconcile House and Senate differences and finalize this bill, we urge you and your colleagues to make much-needed investments in federal healthcare programs and initiatives designed to maintain and expand primary care, ensure an adequate physician workforce, and promote public health, as outlined below. Please continue your ongoing bipartisan work to complete these bills and avoid a government shutdown prior to December 20, 2024, as well as avert another continuing resolution.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 161,000 internal medicine physicians, related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and compassion to the preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Additionally, internal medicine is the specialty with the largest number of active physicians specializing in primary care, with 120,342 internal medicine physicians being identified as specializing in primary care in 2021.

As noted in previous communications to Congress, ACP has engaged with appropriators on the importance of funding key programs that support access to primary care as provided for under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Specifically, for FY 2025, ACP urges Congress to:

- **Fund Title VII, Section 747, Primary Care Training and Enhancement (PCTE) at \$71 million:** The PCTE Program distributes educational grants for primary care physician students, medical residents, fellows, and faculty to enhance primary care provider recruitment. ACP urges more

funding because the Section 747 PCTE program is the only source of federal training dollars available for general internal medicine, general pediatrics, and family medicine. To maintain and expand the pipeline for individuals training in primary care, more resources are necessary than the \$49.9 million appropriated in recent years.

- **Fund the Title X Family Planning Program at least at the Senate level of \$286.5 million:** In 2021, the Title X program served 1.7 million patients, 85 percent female, who received clinical services provided by Title X clinics, including contraceptive services, cervical and breast-cancer screenings, pregnancy testing and counseling, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and various patient education and referral services. Eighty-three percent of these patients had incomes at or below 200 percent of federal poverty, and 65 percent were at or below the federal poverty line. For 60 percent of patients, Title X clinicians were their only regular source of health care.
- **Fund Firearm Injury and Mortality Prevention research at least at the Senate level of \$25 million:** As data-driven decision makers, ACP advocates for robust research about the causes and consequences of firearm violence and unintentional injuries and for strategies to reduce firearm-related injuries. In 2022, more than 48,000 Americans' deaths were firearm related, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). With at least \$12.5 million allocated to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and \$12.5 million to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study firearms safety and gun violence prevention, the gaps that remain in our knowledge about the problem and ways to prevent it can be studied. Federally-funded research is needed on firearms-related violence and on intervention and prevention strategies to reduce injuries caused by firearms and ACP urges Congress to retain this funding level in its final FY2025 LHHS Appropriations bill.
- **Fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at least at the Senate level of \$9.4 billion:** The CDC has a critical mission: To create the expertise, information, and tools needed to protect the public health—through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury, and disability, and preparedness for new health threats. It is the main disease-prevention and wellness-promotion agency, protecting people's health and safety, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and improving health through strong partnerships at the federal, state, and local levels. The CDC has a leading role in taking on the opioid crisis, tobacco and e-cigarette use, the obesity epidemic, and serving as the main pillar of strengthening and expanding our public health workforce and infrastructure. ACP specifically supports CDC efforts to study the cause of injury and mortality caused by firearms, funding public health infrastructure, and access to maternal health, among the CDC's many public health initiatives. We urge you to maintain funding at the senate level for this crucial part of our healthcare infrastructure.

In closing, we urge Congress to act on funding the above-named programs by passing bipartisan appropriations legislation. It is vital to both avoid a federal government shutdown and to extend and fund these important programs to further expand access to primary care services for all Americans. The College is keenly aware of the fiscal pressures facing the Congress at this time but strongly believes the United States must invest robustly in the healthcare workforce and delivery system initiatives that support primary care and the public health, including programs that have a proven track record of

effectiveness but also those that demonstrate the kind of innovation we need in any high-performing health care system. Please contact Jared Frost, Manager, Legislative Affairs at jfrost@acponline.org or 202-261-4526 if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Issac Opole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "I" and "O".

Issac Opole, MBChB, PhD, MACP
President