



## Action Needed from Congress on Critical Health Priorities Before September 30

Key health programs are set to expire on September 30. ACP is calling for Congress to act on these important issues that are critical for internal medicine physicians and patients.

### Extend Telehealth Flexibilities

Congress should extend Medicare telehealth flexibilities established during the pandemic for at least two years through December 2027. A permanent extension of telehealth flexibilities would be ideal, but recognizing the need to extend it this year, ACP is asking Congress to at least pass a two-year extension.

Medicare patients have come to rely on accessing health care by telehealth, and it has become essential for many internal medicine physicians. Extending the telehealth waivers would ensure continued access to care for Medicare patients by removing geographic restrictions, expanding originating sites required for telehealth visits, and providing access to audio-only telehealth. It would also allow for Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) to continue providing telehealth services.

### Reauthorize and Fund the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME)

The NHSC and THCGME programs provide essential training for primary care physicians and support their placement in communities with physician shortages. NHSC awards service-oriented scholarships and loan repayment assistance to health professionals working in underserved communities, while the THCGME program places resident physicians training in primary care into community health centers and similar venues for their training.

These health workforce programs are key components to ensuring a healthy pipeline of incoming primary care physicians in the communities that need them the most. The future physician workforce faces many challenges, with a shortage of between 20,000-40,000 primary care physicians anticipated by 2026 and average medical student debt surpassing \$200,000. These programs help train the physicians our workforce needs. ACP calls on Congress to fund reauthorization of NHSC at no less than \$350 million per year, and support THCGME program funding at no less than \$225 million for FY26.