



To: Members of the Ohio House Finance Committee

Fr: Monica Hueckel, VP, Advocacy, Ohio State Medical Association
Kate Mahler, Executive Vice President, Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
Janet Shaw, Executive Director, Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association

Da: March 13, 2025

Re: HB 96/Amendment HC_136_0641

On behalf of the above organizations, we write today regarding House Bill 96, the state operating budget for fiscal year 2026-2027. The state budget deliberations present a valuable opportunity to highlight and advance one of OSMA's main priorities as an organization, access to care for patients. It is among our highest priorities that we work collaboratively to ensure patients in Ohio's communities are able to access the high quality care they need, and this is of particular concern for vulnerable communities in rural and/or underserved areas. We know this is a concern that is shared by our state's leaders and elected officials.

The need for high quality medical care is in demand in Ohio more than ever. In addition, many of our state's physicians are also reaching retirement age with over 30% of practicing physicians in the state now being over the age of 60. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), there is a projected shortage of up to 86,000 physicians nationwide by 2036. If action is not taken soon to increase the supply of physicians, this problem is bound to only get worse.

In Ohio, we are well-positioned to tackle this issue, with seven medical schools (soon to be 8 with the addition of Xavier) located in our state. These schools are an excellent pipeline to replace the current physician workforce. Also fortunately, enrollment in these schools is also on the rise. From the years 2010 to 2020, there was an increase of 7.6% in M.D. programs and a 106% increase in D.O. programs. Naturally, due to the increase in enrollment, Ohio has the potential to soon be infused with plenty of new, young physicians; however, there is a huge obstacle we absolutely must address to fully realize that potential.

After students complete medical school, they are required to complete a residency program as part of their training, which usually takes about 3 to 5 years. An overwhelming majority of residents tend to stay and practice in the state where they complete their residency. Unfortunately, there are currently more medical school graduates than available residency slots in Ohio. The number of residency slots is largely controlled at the federal level, but states, including Ohio, can add additional slots by funding those slots through the state's budget.

We have requested the inclusion of Amendment HC_136_0641, which allocates an additional \$10 million over the biennium, specifically slated to be used to support residency slots in family medicine

and psychiatry. These are the areas of greatest need in order to help to provide high quality, necessary medical care to our communities. The amendment directs the Ohio Department of Health to establish requirements regarding the distribution of these funds.

Ohio's quantity of slots has mostly remained unchanged for decades, meaning it is unable to meet the demand. The majority of our medical students leave Ohio to do their residencies outside of the state, and most do not return once their training is complete. It is extremely important that Ohio prioritize training as many physicians in residency as possible here, giving them a better chance to stay and serve our communities. In order to create the opportunities Ohio medical students need, it is imperative that the state fund these additional slots. We strongly urge support for HC_136_0641, as this funding will help ensure Ohioans continue to have access to the medical care they need in the years to come.

Thank you for your consideration of our remarks. Our organizations appreciate the opportunity to be meaningful contributors to the legislative process. Please contact us should you have any questions.