



Physicians Caring for Texans

March 21, 2018

Carlos J. Cardenas, MD
Chief Administrative Officer
Doctors Hospital at Renaissance
5501 S. McColl Rd.
Edinburg, TX 78539

Dear Dr. Cardenas:

On behalf of over 51,000 physician and medical student members of the Texas Medical Association (“TMA”), I am writing in recognition of your hospital’s efforts to promote a change in Medicare graduate medical education (GME) payment policies. TMA’s policies support the achievement of a GME system that is sufficient to meet the training needs of Texas medical school graduates. TMA is a private, voluntary, non-profit association of Texas physicians and medical students that was founded in 1853 to serve the people of Texas in matters of medical care, prevention and cure of disease, and improvement of public health. Today, its vision is to “Improve the health of all Texans.”

To help facilitate the needed growth in residency positions in the state, TMA supports a lifting of the Medicare GME funding caps that have been in place since 1996. In addition, TMA supports the eligibility of new teaching hospitals for Medicare GME payments. Further, a change in Medicare GME payment policies is needed to provide more flexibility in the cap-setting deadline for new residency programs in medically underserved and economically depressed areas. TMA believes new teaching institutions in these areas should be afforded additional time beyond the current five-year cap-setting deadline, such as seven to 10 years. This additional time is critically important because of the limited resources and lack of infrastructure in these areas that present real challenges to the development of new residency programs. Sufficient time is needed to allow eligible teaching partners to be identified and for a full complement of residency programs to be established, in accordance with national accreditation standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to share TMA’s policy on the need for greater flexibility in the Medicare GME cap-setting deadline for medically underserved and economically depressed areas. If you should have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact: Marcia Collins, Director of Medical Education, or Michelle Romero, Associate Director of Advocacy, at TMA’s main number 512-370-1300.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Hays, MD, Chair
Council on Medical Education