

November 21, 2017

The Honorable C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Governor, State of Idaho  
State Capitol  
700 West Jefferson Street  
Boise, ID 83702

Honorable Members of the  
Legislature of the State of Idaho  
State Capitol  
700 West Jefferson Street  
Boise, ID 83702

Re: Graduate Medical Education in Idaho – Ten Year Strategic Plan

The undersigned Idaho stakeholders share a common interest in ensuring the effectiveness of Idaho's medical education and residency training programs, now and into the future, and are in support of a ten-year plan for graduate medical education in Idaho. Idaho faces a significant challenge with producing and ensuring a well-trained physician workforce for the future.

#### **Idaho's Current Status**

- Idaho ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the United States for physicians per capita
- Idaho ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the US for medical residents per capita
  - Idaho: 6.7 medical residents per 100,000 people
  - US: 28.1 medical residents per 100,000 people
- 27% of Idaho's physicians are over age 60 and will reach retirement age in the next 10 years

Thanks to the leadership and support of the Governor and Legislature, Idaho's current medical school pipeline is robust, with 40 students/year at WWAMI, 10 students/year at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and an anticipated 150 students/year at the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine. The success of these programs to meet the goal of increasing our physician workforce depends on the availability of Idaho residency training programs, which is the next required phase of physician education after completion of medical school.

#### **Looking to the Future: Ten Year Strategic Plan**

Following graduation from medical school, physicians must obtain additional training through residency programs, which are also referred to as graduate medical education (GME). A Governor-appointed workgroup led by the Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE), identified expansion of GME residency programs as the next critical step in the pipeline to grow the physician workforce in our state. The location of residency programs is highly correlated with where physicians will ultimately practice medicine, with 50-75% of them staying within 100 miles of their residency training sites. Under the guidance of SBOE, a group of stakeholders from every single medical education and residency program in Idaho came together to develop a Ten Year Strategic Plan for GME Expansion. Implementation of the plan would:

- Increase the number of GME programs from 9 to 21 in all geographic regions of Idaho
- Increase the number of Residents/Fellows training in Idaho from 141 to 356
- Raise Idaho's per capita number of medical residents from 6.7 per 100,000 people to 17.7
- Graduate 2,000 Idaho-trained residents over the ten years of the plan
- Require the initial investment of \$5.239 million in new funding in FY2019, with smaller annual increases over the next nine years of the plan
- Create 17 new residency positions in the first year
- Average annual funding increase requests over the ten years of the plan would be \$1.63 million per year
- The state's investment in GME will be matched with significant investment by the sponsoring facilities and programs—state will only be covering 1/3 the full cost of implementation of the expanded pipeline

### **Benefits of Expanding GME in Idaho**

- As the largest providers of care to Medicaid and uninsured patients, these residencies will help Idaho meet the urgent medical needs of our rural and underserved communities
- 50-60% of trained residents will practice in Idaho based on current retention rates
- Economic impact of each practicing physician in Idaho:
  - Supports an average of 10 jobs
  - Produces \$1.3 million in direct and indirect economic output
  - Generates nearly \$50K per physician in state and local taxes
- Total positive economic impact to Idaho, even at lowest in-state retention rate (50%) will be \$1.3 billion and provide a return on investment of over 10 to 1.

Thank you for your dedication to Idaho and Idaho's citizens. The work you do is important, and we know you must make many difficult decisions. We sincerely appreciate your time and attention to this letter. We look forward to speaking with you about improving medical education and residency training opportunities in Idaho, and thereby improving Idahoan's access to quality health care.

A full copy or summary of the Ten Year Strategic Plan for Graduate Medical Education is available upon request.

The following organizations support the development of and funding for the  
[Ten Year Strategic Plan for GME Expansion in Idaho:](#)

Susie Pouliot, CEO  
Idaho Medical Association