



BACKGROUND ON THE BIPARTISAN FAIR ACT

Physicians must complete GME training in a particular specialty — such as family medicine or anesthesiology — after four years of medical school before they can practice medicine independently. During their training, residents work under the supervision of other physicians to gain experience caring for patients. Residents often train in their chosen specialty for at least 3 years, but some residents choose specialties with a longer residency training period.

The Federal government is the largest source of federal financial support for the U.S. healthcare workforce and contributes more than \$16 billion per year to GME medical residency training programs, the bulk of which is Medicare-funded GME for physicians.

The FAIR Act would address the problem of GME programs often excluding or imposing burdensome requirements for Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (DOs). According to National Resident Matching Program data, 29 percent of residency program directors never or seldom interview DO candidates, and of those that do, three-quarters require the MD licensing exam, the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). DO students take the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination of the United States (COMLEX-USA) for graduation and licensure. Both the COMLEX-USA and USMLE confer unrestricted physician licenses. DO students should not be subjected to exclusion or the emotional and financial strain of a second exam, which exceeds physician licensure requirements.

Osteopathic medicine is one of the fastest-growing health professions in the United States and colleges of osteopathic medicine are now educating 25 percent of all medical students. DOs are meeting our nation's healthcare needs, prioritizing primary care specialties, and practicing in rural and underserved areas at notably high rates.



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Physician distribution is influenced by training location and more than 73 percent of DOs practice in the state where they do their residency training. Unnecessary and unfair residency criteria negatively impact physician distribution leading to disparities in health care access.

East Tennessee is home to **Lincoln Memorial University - DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine** (Harrogate; Knoxville), an osteopathic medical school in Tennessee.