

AAPI Visits Capitol Hill to Discuss Legislation to Increase Medical Residency Slots

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AAPI President Dr. Vinod K. Shah, Director of Legislative Affairs Dino Teppara, Dr. Gaurav Shah, and Dr. Yamah Alam visited Capitol Hill to discuss legislation that would increase medical residency slots in the U.S. The pending bills, H.R. 2251 and S. 973, would add 15,000 residency slots to existing medical residency programs.

Both bills were included in the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committee mark-ups but language specifically adding the 15,000 slots was excluded. On behalf of the nation's physicians of Indian origin, Dr. Shah personally spoke to House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and his Chief of Staff Terry Lierman about the importance of including more residency slots now for practicing physicians America will need in the future.

The group also met with Eli Kogan, the health care staff member in U.S. Rep. Joe Crowley's office, to thank the Congressman for introducing the legislation in the House. They also discussed how AAPI can work with Congressman Crowley and Senate Sponsor Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) to ensure inclusion of the legislation in the final Conference Committee Report on health care reform and include the 15,000 slots.

The main points of this debate are:

- The overall score or cost of the provision is estimated to be \$13 billion
- The cost for one residency slot is \$1.5 million over ten years, or \$150,000 per year for every slot
- 36,000 physicians applied for a residency in 2008 but only 21,000 slots were available, leaving approximately 15,000 physicians unable to begin their residency
- The U.S. currently has a shortage of practicing physicians, which will only become exacerbated in the coming years as more baby boomers retire
- These qualified physicians are left unable to practice their vocation simply because there are not enough residency slots available to match demand
- Congress should include this increase to ensure patients will be able to receive the health care they deserve