

# COGME

## Council on Graduate Medical Education

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*H. David Reines, M.D.*  
*Chair*

*Gamini Soori, MD, MBA, FACP,*  
*FRCP, CPE*  
*Vice-Chair*

May 4, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman, Committee on  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman, Committee on  
and Commerce  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy  
Energy and Commerce  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sylvia Burwell  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell, Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Upton, and Ranking Member Pallone, Jr.:

The Council on Graduate Medical Education (COGME) has conducted a review of reports on Graduate Medical Education (GME) from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, and the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. COGME has also received input from a variety of stakeholders, including the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, the Association of American Medical Colleges, and many generalist and specialty groups. In keeping with recommendations from these organizations, COGME concurs and recommends that a comprehensive National Strategic Plan be developed for GME and that COGME lead this effort with sufficient staff resources and funding allocated to develop the plan – estimated to be in the amount of \$2 to \$2.5 million.

COGME has consistently found that the overall quality of the U.S. medical education system is high. However, there is much to be accomplished to enhance the accountability of the GME enterprise to the American people and to increase the relevance of training programs to the needs of the 21st century healthcare environment. With very limited resources, COGME has provided 22 reports designed to address many of these issues. The current circumstances provide an important opportunity to advance progress in the improvement of GME, building on the important ideas and recommendations of the various entities. For this reason, COGME recommends the development of a comprehensive National Strategic Plan for GME. The plan would articulate a clear vision and mission statement for GME. It would identify specific goals and objectives for the enterprise with a clear timetable for accomplishing them. The plan would also identify the entities and public and private organizations and agencies that should have

responsibility for accomplishing the goals and objectives. COGME believes this can be accomplished without the creation of new organizations because there are excellent health workforce research centers in both the public and private sector that could contribute to the identification of specific workforce needs on a state by state basis, according to criteria identified in the Strategic Plan.

COGME's charter includes not only this type of specific recommendation, but a broader responsibility to advise the Federal Government on GME and would be the appropriate entity to develop and oversee the strategic planning process. Although other organizations have had input into this process, such as the Institute of Medicine, they have not had sustainable and prolonged effect on the GME entity.

The planning process would be extensive and comprehensive. COGME estimates it will take a minimum of 18-24 months from the initiation of the process. It would require considerable input from the public, stakeholders, community leaders, and others in the form of workshops and symposia across the country. Consultants with expertise in organizational dynamics, economics, workforce issues, education, and healthcare delivery would be required as part of the process. An experienced and highly qualified director would be required to administer the process.

Adequate resources must be provided to COGME to accomplish these goals and objectives. This includes additional staff, funds to support meetings and workshops, adequate Council membership with relevant expertise, and funds to hire consultants. Approximately, \$2 to \$2.5 million would be required for the entire project. While this is a significant amount, it is small in comparison to the \$15 billion a year or \$150 billion over the next decade in federal support of the GME effort. COGME strongly believes that by establishing a National Strategic Plan, such an effort would:

- Give stronger support for integrating future manpower predictions with the needs of the country;
- Better align the GME system with national priorities;
- Maximize efficiencies presently lacking in the system;
- Add transparency to the funding of GME; and
- Establish an enduring method for continuing to realign physician training with the needs of the country

In summary, COGME recommends the following:

- 1) A comprehensive National Strategic Plan be developed for GME; and
- 2) COGME lead this effort with staff and financial resources in the amount of \$2 to \$2.5 million to develop the Strategic Plan.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. There is urgency in confronting these challenges and COGME would be pleased to work closely with you and your staff in advancing and improving GME.

Sincerely,

/s/

H. David Reines, MD, FACS  
Chairman  
Council on Graduate Medical Education

cc: James Macrae  
Acting Administrator  
Health Resources and Services Administration