

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY  
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC  
APRIL 9 - 11, 2024**

**GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION:  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE – UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE**

**ISSUE:** California faces a shortage of physicians, with Inland Southern California having among the most severe shortages in the country. This issue was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the demand for physicians will continue to rise due to a growing population, aging baby boomers, and a wave of soon-to-retire doctors.

**ACTION:** The Monday Morning Group urges Congress and the Administration to take action in support of Graduate Medical Education (GME). It is widely agreed that the hindrance in producing more doctors is in GME due to the cap on Medicare-funded GME slots imposed by the Balanced Budget Act of 1996. An expansion in the number of residency training slots in the Inland Southern California region is necessary to address physician shortages and retain physicians upon completion of their training.

The Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2023 (H.R. 2389) aims to gradually expand the number of Medicare-supported medical residency positions by 14,000 over seven years. It will prioritize programs affiliated with new medical schools at universities like the University of California, Riverside (UCR) and that also serve areas designated as health professional shortage areas.

**BACKGROUND:** San Bernardino and Riverside counties, the Inland Empire, is a rapidly growing and ethnically diverse region. According to California Department of Finance projections, nearly a third of California's growth over the next 25 years will occur in the Inland Empire alone. Inland Southern California is currently facing a growing shortfall of primary care physicians. Currently, there are only 41 primary care physicians for every 100,000 people compared to the recommended level of 60 to 80 primary care physicians per 100,000.

California has lower ratios of medical residents per capita than the overall United States. The state is ranked 29<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states that have residency programs in the ratio of residents per 100,000 population. Inland Southern California has a severe scarcity of residency training programs largely due to the difficulty in recruiting physicians to the region. Research indicates that physicians are likely to set up practice in the geographic region where they complete their training. In addition to the substantial need for primary care specialties family medicine, general internal medicine, and general pediatrics, the region is in critical need of many more general surgeons, obstetricians/gynecologists (OB/GYNs), and psychiatrists. Every hospital – particularly those in rural areas – needs general surgeons to keep their emergency department open. Because of the region's relatively high fertility rate demands more OB/GYNs. Additionally, there is a documented critical shortage of psychiatrists in Riverside County.

The UCR School of Medicine is well-positioned to compete for residency training slots that are designated for primary care and short-supply specialties. The UCR medical school has developed Graduate Medical Education (GME) in primary care and short-supply specialties of general internal medicine, family medicine, primary care pediatrics, and psychiatry. In addition, fellowship programs have been established and are currently operating in child and adolescent psychiatry, cardiovascular medicine, critical care medicine, and gastroenterology.

Further expanding GME will be the most effective means of addressing the doctor shortage and diversifying the physician workforce, thereby improving health care access and delivery in the Inland Empire.