



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®



THE PLASTIC SURGERY
FOUNDATION™

Executive Office

444 East Algonquin Road • Arlington Heights, IL 60005-4664

847-228-9900 • Fax: 847-228-9131 • www.plasticsurgery.org

May 11, 2015

The Honorable Bill Nelson
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: S.1148 – Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2015

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) is the largest association of plastic surgeons in the world, representing more than 7,000 members and 94 percent of all American Board of Plastic Surgery board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States. ASPS promotes the highest quality patient care, professional and ethical standards. Our members provide highly skilled surgical services that improve both the functional capacity and quality of life of patients, including treatment of congenital deformities, burn injuries, traumatic injuries, hand conditions, and cancer.

We strongly support your legislation, S.1148, the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2015*, and the expansion of funding to improve physician training. The number of Medicare funded GME positions in the United States has remained capped since the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Still, there has never been such a need to increase the number of residency slots available, as an unprecedented number of Americans have access to health services through the Affordable Care Act, as more than 100,000 seniors become eligible for Medicare every day, and as the number of American medical school graduates is poised to reach record numbers.

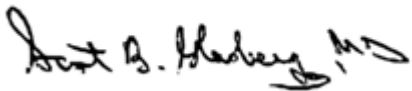
According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, an overall shortage of 91,000 physicians will occur by 2020. By 2025, the shortage is expected to reach 130,000. While there is undoubtedly serious concern for access to primary care providers, one-half of this shortage will come from specialty physicians. We appreciate your inclusion of specialty medicine within your legislation, as the field of plastic and reconstructive surgery also has areas of need.

A recent American College of Surgeons Health Policy Research Institute study shows that there is an average of two plastic surgeons per 100,000 individuals in the United States. Plastic surgeons play an integral role in the treatment of breast cancer, which is the second leading cause of death in women. It is estimated that over 230,000 new cases will be identified each year. Several studies have found a direct correlation between the rates of women in a given geographic

location who receive breast reconstruction and the number of plastic surgeons practicing in that location. The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 mandates that reconstructive procedures be offered, yet shortages of qualified surgeons have and will continue to limit availability and proper care for the patient.

We applaud your efforts to increase the number of Medicare supported residency positions nationally by 15,000 over five years. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on S.1148, the *Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2015* and looks forward to working with you to advance this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Hermes, Senior Manager of Advocacy and Government Affairs, with any questions – Phermes@plasticsurgery.org or (847) 228-3331.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scot B. Glasberg, MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

Scot B. Glasberg, MD
President, American Society of Plastic Surgeons