



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H. 2198
AN ACT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO FAMILY PHYSICIANS
BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023**

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) wishes to be recorded in support of House bill 2198, *An Act to Improve Access To Family Physicians*.

The MMS is a professional association of over 25,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The Medical Society is committed to advocating on behalf of patients for a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them to provide the best care possible. **MMS believes that creating additional graduate medical education in community health centers to train family medicine physicians is a crucial step in addressing the significant challenges across Massachusetts regarding health care workforce shortages and access to primary care.**

While there are many thoughtful initiatives in place to expand access to primary care, such as expanded coverage for telemedicine, better care coordination and team-based health care, there is a pressing need to increase the number of primary care physicians in Massachusetts. A study from the Robert Graham Center projected that Massachusetts will need an additional 725 primary care physicians by 2030.¹ A Meritt Hawkins report from 2015 showed that 26.8% of physicians in Massachusetts were over the age of 60.² Moreover, there are even greater needs for new primary care physician in underserved communities and in setting such as community health centers. Studies show that physicians trained in these communities and these settings are more likely to practice in these areas of primary care shortage.

¹ <https://www.graham-center.org/content/dam/rgc/documents/maps-data-tools/state-collections/workforce-projections/Massachusetts.pdf>

² <https://www.hasc.org/sites/main/files/link1mhawwhitepaperaging.pdf>

MMS also supports this legislation as a way to diversify the physician workforce, a priority issue for the Society. Numerous studies have shown that clinical outcomes are improved when care to patients from historically marginalized communities when the care is provided by a person from that community.³

For all of these reasons, MMS strongly supports expansion of the state's Primary Care Residency Grant Program to provide even greater state support of graduate medical education at community health centers to create a diverse pipeline of family medicine physicians.

Thank you for your consideration, the Medical Society respectfully urges a favorable report on H. 2198.

³ Gomez LE, Bernet P. Diversity improves performance and outcomes. J Natl Med Assoc. 2019 Aug;111(4):383-392. doi: 10.1016/j.jnma.2019.01.006. Epub 2019 Feb 11. PMID: 30765101, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30765101/>