



2014 Primary Care Summit Recommendations:

Georgia Primary Care Residency Programs: Loan Forgiveness Options

PROBLEM: 18% of Georgia's PGY 1 primary care residency slots were filled by Georgia medical school graduates in 2013; however only 13% of the Family Medicine and Internal Medicine slots were filled by Georgia medical school graduates. Data from the Georgia Board for Physician Workforce (GBPWF) suggests that the state retains 50% of the overall graduates of its residency programs; however the retention rate is closer to 82% when GME graduates also attended a Georgia medical school and high school. The most striking need, as reflected below, is to increase the percentage of residency slots in Family Medicine and General Internal Medicine that are being filled by Georgia medical school graduates.

CURRENT BENCHMARK:

ACADEMIC YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2013			
SPECIALTY	Georgia PGY-1 Positions	Number And Percent Of GA Primary Care and other GME slots filled by GA medical school graduates	
		NUMBER	PERCENT
Family Medicine	78	10	13%
Internal Medicine	150	20	13%
Pediatrics	57	22	39%
Primary Care TOTAL	285	52	18%
OB/GYN	26	11	42%
General Surgery	47	11	23%
Emergency Medicine	33	10	30%
All other Specialties	113	38	34%
TOTAL	504	122	24%

GOAL 1: Increase the percentage of GA Family Medicine residency positions filled by GA medical school graduates to 40%.

GOAL 2: Increase the number of GA General Internal Medicine residency positions filled by GA medical school graduates to 20%.¹

¹ National data indicate that 20% or less of Internal Medicine residents actually stay in General Internal Medicine and do not specialize. It is therefore logical to presume that only 20% of Georgia's internal medicine residents will remain in general primary care practice in internal medicine.

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STRATEGIES:

1. Provide loan forgiveness beginning in PGY 1 for family medicine and general internal medicine residency slots for Georgia medical school graduates selecting Georgia residency training programs.

- a. Creating loan repayment incentives for 40% of the Family Medicine PGY 1 slots would target 31 slots
- b. Creating loan repayment incentives for 20% of the Internal Medicine PGY 1 slots would target 30 slots
- c. Program would be administered by the Georgia Board for Physician Workforce (GBPW) and rules and regulations would be promulgated by that Board; administrative costs would be minimal but necessary to absorb the additional programmatic tasks
- d. Loan Repayments are made directly to the lender by the GBPW, thus no tax implications for recipient
- e. Family Medicine and General Internal Medicine Residency programs last 3 years
- f. Service commitment would be three years practice in Georgia immediately post residency AND agreement to take Medicaid patients into their practice.
- g. Loan Repayment would begin during the first year of residency training and would continue annually through PGY-3.

Estimated Cost Options to provide Loan Forgiveness for Family Medicine and General Internal Medicine, PGY 1:

FUNDING OPTIONS	Loan Repayment Levels	FAMILY MEDICINE (TARGET: 40% of PGY 1 slots)	GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE (TARGET: 20% of PGY 1 slots)	ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (to the GBPW)	TOTAL
		31	30		
Option 1	@ \$10,000 per year	310,000	300,000	\$60,000	\$670,000
Option 2	@ \$15,000 per year	465,000	450,000	\$60,000	\$975,000

2. Extend Loan forgiveness to PGY 2-3 for each eligible residency program in years 2-3 of the program to support recipients over the residency education pipeline (3 years for Family Medicine, General Internal Medicine and General Pediatrics).

Estimated Cost Options to provide Loan Forgiveness for Family Medicine and General Internal Medicine, YEARS 2-3:

FUNDING OPTIONS	Loan Repayment Levels	YEAR 2			TOTAL YEAR 2	YEAR 3			TOTAL YEAR 3
		FM	IM	ADMIN. COSTS (to the GBPW)		FM	IM	ADMIN. COSTS (to the GBPW)	
SLOTS		62	60		122	93	90		183
Option 1	@ \$10,000 per year	620,000	600,000	60,000	1,280,000	930,000	900,000	\$60,000	1,890,000
Option 2	@ \$15,000 per year	930,000	900,000	60,000	1,890,000	1,395,000	1,350,000	\$60,000	2,805,000

EXPECTED RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

Within three years the state would be retaining up to 183 new family medicine / general internal medicine physicians who heretofore were only 50% likely to remain in state to practice. Traditionally, 82% of Georgia GME graduates who also graduated from a Georgia medical school, remain in the state to practice. It is believed that this will be even higher if they receive loan forgiveness in residency. Those who receive the residency loan forgiveness but do not meet the service obligations would have to make restitution as set by the GBPW for non-compliance.

This new loan repayment program would encourage Georgia medical students to enter the Georgia FM and IM GME programs and to ultimately practice in Georgia and to serve the Medicaid population in the state. They would still be eligible for the existing PRAA GME Loan Forgiveness Program available for GME graduates practicing in rural areas of the state.

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