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**Family physicians commend Sen. Jane Nelson for filing Physician
Workforce Improvement Act**
*Legislation aims to address training, debt for physicians in primary
care and other needed specialties*

AUSTIN, TEXAS — The Texas Academy of Family Physicians lauds Sen. Jane Nelson for filing Senate Bill 143, the Physician Workforce Improvement Act. This landmark legislation is the first step to address the critical physician workforce shortages Texas faces. S.B. 143 will expand graduate medical education residency training positions for primary care specialties including family medicine, pediatrics, and general internal medicine and it will strengthen Texas' groundbreaking physician education loan repayment program.

“We applaud Sen. Nelson for her bold leadership to address Texas' physician workforce shortage” said TAFP President Troy Fiesinger, M.D. “Increasing the workforce in primary care will improve the availability of essential health care services that have been proven to be most effective at keeping our patients healthier and out of the most expensive care settings.”

Sen. Nelson and her staff have long understood the barriers to increasing the primary care physician workforce in Texas and the increasing challenges imposed by the state's changing demographics. Texas already experiences physician shortages in rural and inner-city areas, and these access issues will certainly worsen as the population continues to balloon at both ends of the age spectrum and presents with more chronic illness. Without the right kind of doctors to care for Texans at the right time and in the right setting, these demographic challenges will further strain our health care resources.

In light of a recent report by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board showing Texas will soon have fewer first-year residency training positions than graduating medical students, Sen. Nelson's bill couldn't come at a better time.

“TAFP recognizes Sen. Nelson’s extensive and decorated record of tackling the most difficult issues in health care policy,” Fiesinger said. “All Texans will benefit from her expertise as she considers solutions to this pressing concern in the 83rd Texas Legislature.”

“Sen. Nelson keenly recognizes that physician workforce shortages are significant and that these shortages will likely to supplant access to health insurance as the major barrier to health care in Texas.”

The 83rd Legislature has a narrow window to address these concerns and TAFP urges legislators to follow Sen. Nelson’s lead in finding innovative solutions to rectify the severe physician workforce shortages for better population health and economic stability for Texas now and in the future.

The Texas Academy of Family Physicians is the premier membership organization dedicated to uniting the family doctors of Texas through advocacy, education and member services, and empowering them to provide a medical home for patients of all ages. It has 33 local chapters and is a chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Visit www.tafp.org for more information.

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