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April 7, 2026

The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues  
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
State House, Room 212  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Rodrigues,

On behalf of the over 23,000 physician, resident, and student members of the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS), we extend our sincere gratitude for your leadership in producing S.3041, which strategically directs resources toward urgent state priorities and enhances the well-being of Massachusetts residents.

We are grateful for the inclusion of critical funding to support public higher education and protect access to care, including \$100M in bridge funding for public higher education institutions impacted by federal research losses and \$3.5M for the Affirming Health Care Trust Fund. These targeted investments will help sustain vital research infrastructure and ensure continued access to essential health care for vulnerable patients.

We particularly commend your inclusion of the proposed tuition assistance pilot program for UMass Chan Medical School students pursuing family medicine. This innovative approach recognizes the significant role that educational debt plays in shaping physician career choices and takes meaningful action to reverse declining entry into primary care. By investing in the next generation of family medicine physicians and prioritizing care for underserved populations, this initiative will help ensure that patients across the Commonwealth can access timely, high-quality primary care.

We believe the following amendment would build upon the Senate's commitment to strengthen the primary care workforce in underserved communities:

### **Amendment #221**

This amendment would expand eligibility for this pilot program to include independent provider organizations that serve a significant proportion (not less than 30%) of publicly insured patients. Independent primary care practices play a critical role in delivering care to underserved and rural populations. These practices often operate with limited financial resources and without the infrastructure of larger systems, yet they care for a substantial share of vulnerable patients and face persistent challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians, especially in certain regions of the Commonwealth, including much of Western Massachusetts. Expanding eligibility to include these practices will help ensure the program more fully achieves its goal of strengthening the primary care workforce and improving access to care across the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Olivia C. Liao, MD, FACS