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CONTACT: Greg Ensell
Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association
602-694-5510 or gensell@azhha.org

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Arizona Senate Passes Proposal to Combat State Physician Shortage
Hospitals and Health Centers Applaud Passage of SB1354: Graduate Medical Education

PHOENIX – The Arizona State Senate today passed with bipartisan support legislation to help combat Arizona’s physician shortage.

Arizona’s physician shortage is one of the worst in the nation. The state ranks 44th of 50 states in primary care physicians. The problem is worse in rural parts of the state. More than 95% of Cochise, Santa Cruz and Yuma county residents live in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

Senate Bill 1354, if passed, will help alleviate the physician shortage by appropriating a total of $50 million split among five programs including Graduate Medical Education (GME), the University of Arizona Medical School, primary care provider loan repayment, medical student loan repayments, and nurse training.

It has been more than a decade since the state has provided general funds for GME, the technical term for physician residencies.

“On behalf of the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) and our members, I applaud legislators for recognizing the state’s physician shortage and taking action to remedy it,” said AzHHA President and CEO Greg Vigdor. “This is the type of bold, visionary leadership needed to protect the health of Arizona’s people, patients and communities.”

Tara Plese, Chief External Affairs Officer of the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers, added. “Over 600,000 Arizonans receive primary healthcare services at Community Health Centers. This bill will enhance their ability to train medical residents, doctors and nurses, to meet the demand for services in Arizona’s rural areas.”

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Facts About Arizona’s Physician Shortage

- Arizona has primary care physician (PCP) shortages in all counties & worse in rural areas.
  - Arizona meets just 41.7% of its PCP need.
  - Arizona ranks 44th of 50 states in total active PCPs at 77.9 per 100,000 population (U.S. is 91.7)
- Arizona’s rural counties face the most severe shortages
  - 100% of residents in Yuma and Santa Cruz counties live in of primary care shortage area (HPSA)
  - 98% of residents in Cochise County live in of primary care shortage area (HPSA)
  - 68% of residents in Pinal County live in of primary care shortage area (HPSA)
  - 61% of residents in Mohave County live in of primary care shortage area (HPSA)