



TALKING POINTS FOR THE CRITICAL CARE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

- The US is currently experiencing a shortage of physicians who care for the critically ill, who are in the most danger of dying from an acute/critical illness.
- The demand for ICU services is projected to grow rapidly during the next 10 years, as the average acuity of hospitalized patients rises with the growth of the elderly population.
- Research has shown that optimal care is delivered by intensivists for these patients.
- Currently only one-third of these patients are cared for by intensivists. As a result, two-thirds may be receiving suboptimal care.
- In 2003, Congress asked the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to work with the nation's leading critical care societies to update critical care workforce models in order to more accurately assess the adequacy of the supply of critical care physicians. Their report, which was released in May 2006, validated that this shortage exists.
- The ACCP, along with the American Thoracic Society, Society of Critical Care Medicine, American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, and the National Association for Medical Direction of Respiratory Care, worked with Representatives Schakowsky (D-IL-9) and Cantor (R-VA-7) to introduce the *Patient-Focused Critical Care Enhancement Act*, HR 1581, on March 18, 2009. Senators Whitehouse (D-RI), Crapo (R-ID), and Graham (R-SC) introduced a companion bill, S 1020, on May 12.
- The legislation would take an important step to improve the efficiency and retention of the critical care workforce, while reducing its burnout rate by:
 - funding the development of innovative approaches to critical care, through the use of telemedicine in rural inpatient critical care settings, and seeking to increase the supply of critical care physicians through National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Programs.
 - funding research in standardization, staffing patterns, and coordinated community and regional approaches to providing critical care services.
- The critical care workforce shortage is unique.
 - Congress requested that HRSA examine the adequacy of the critical care workforce.
 - HRSA wrote the report and validated that this shortage exists.
 - An inadequate supply of critical care physicians impacts all acutely ill patients - it is not organ/disease specific.
 - An estimated 360,000 deaths occur each year in the ICU not managed by intensivists.

THE "ASK:" Become a cosponsor of the *Patient-Focused Critical Care Enhancement Act* (S 1020/HR 1581).