

April 3, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Baldwin, and Ranking Members DeLauro and Moore Capito:

The more than 90 undersigned members of Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) urge Congress to provide \$1.51 billion for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII health professions and Title VIII nursing workforce development programs for FY 2024. HPNEC is an alliance of national organizations representing schools, students, health professionals, and communities dedicated to ensuring that the health care workforce is educated and trained to meet the needs of all patients.

We appreciate that Congress has allocated modest increases for a handful of Title VII and Title VIII programs in recent years; however, funding for most programs, including the health and nursing workforce pipeline programs, has been stagnant. For decades, these programs have proven successful in shaping the health workforce, especially in rural and other underserved areas. Recognizing federal budget constraints, the Title VII and Title VIII recommendations have not increased for three years, and the true promise of these workforce pipeline programs remains unfulfilled. The coalition's proposed funding level will help address health workforce shortages in critical areas of need, and shape the future health workforce at all stages of the continuum.

Health provider shortages have led to widening gaps in care for our most vulnerable patients, including an aging population that requires more health care services. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2045, our population will grow by over 18%, and one in five Americans will be over the age of 65. Furthermore, HRSA estimates that 99 million Americans currently live in federally designated primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), 70 million live in dental health HPSAs, and 160 million live in mental health HPSAs. At least 17,000 primary care practitioners, 12,000 dental health practitioners, and 8,000 mental health practitioners are needed to serve these areas.

Additionally, COVID-19, RSV, and mpox, on top of substance use, mental, and maternal health crises, have strained the U.S. health system. Our nation's health workforce carried us through overlapping public health emergencies, despite health professional shortages, provider burnout, and an over-capacity health system. Simultaneously, the pandemic has underscored the need to increase and continuously reshape our health workforce.

The HRSA Title VII and Title VIII programs educate current and future providers to serve the nation's ever-growing needs, while preparing for the health care demands of tomorrow. These programs have

proven successful in recruiting, training, and supporting nurses, physicians and physician assistants, mental health providers, and other health professionals critical to addressing country's evolving health care needs and future unexpected crises. In fact, studies have shown that Title VII and Title VIII programs lead to increases in the number of students from rural and other underrepresented communities enrolling in health professions schools and training in rural settings.

Furthermore, the HRSA health professions and nursing workforce programs are structured to advance new delivery systems and models of care — for example, promoting interprofessional teams and integrating mental health services with primary care. Whether developing new curriculum to address emerging public health crises, such as substance use disorders, or collaborating with community leaders in educating providers to provide community-based training opportunities and community-specific care, the Title VII and Title VIII programs help ensure our health workforce is at the forefront of meeting all patients' health needs.

Title VII and Title VIII programs include:

- **Nursing Workforce Development** programs provide federal support to address all aspects of nursing workforce demands, including education, practice, recruitment, and retention, with a focus on the health care needs of rural and underserved communities.
- **Primary Care Medicine, Medical Student Education, Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment, and Oral Health Training** programs improve health care access and quality in underserved areas by training general internists, family medicine practitioners, general pediatricians, pediatric subspecialists, oral health providers, and physician assistants.
- **Health Careers Opportunity Program, Centers of Excellence, Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, and Faculty Loan Repayments** programs support the training and mentorship of future health professionals from rural and underrepresented backgrounds.
- **Area Health Education Centers, Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Programs, and Geriatrics Academic Career Awards**, which support interdisciplinary, community-based training programs for health care professionals, provide support for health care delivery in rural and urban underserved areas.
- **Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program, Mental and Substance Use Disorders Workforce Training Demonstration Program, and the Graduate Psychology Education Program**, strengthens our nation's demand for mental health and substance use support, which is expected to increase dramatically due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Public Health Workforce Development** programs train America's public health workforce to identify underlying causes of health issues, new disease strains, health disparities, and other public health issues vital to the country's response to any pandemic.
- **Health Professions Workforce Information and Analysis**, which advises future decision making on America's health workforce during times of crisis.

With our nation needing to increase investment in our health workforce, HPNEC urges Congress to provide \$1.51 billion for the HRSA Title VII and Title VIII programs in FY 2024.

Thank you for consideration of this recommendation. We welcome the opportunity to provide any additional information. If you have further questions, please contact Katherine Cruz (kcruz@aamc.org).

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM)

AMDA - The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine
American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of PAs
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training
American Association of Naturopathic Physicians
American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)
American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP)
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American College of Academic Addiction Medicine (ACAAM)
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Rheumatology
American Council of Academic Physical Therapy
American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Student Association
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Pediatric Society
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society For Clinical Laboratory Science
American Society for Clinical Pathology
Association of Academic Chairs of Emergency Medicine
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries
Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges
Association of American Indian Physicians
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Bioethics Program Directors
Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology
Association of Chiropractic Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools (AMHPS)
Association of Pathology Chairs
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of the Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)
Association of University Programs in Health Administration
Council on Social Work Education
Eldercare Workforce Alliance
Heart Failure Society of America
Hematology/Oncology Pharmacy Association (HOPA)
Medical Organization for Latino Advancement
National AHEC Organization (NAO)
National Association for Geriatric Education
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council for Diversity in Health Professions (NCDHP)
National Hispanic Medical Association
National League for Nursing
National Medical Association
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
North American Primary Care Research Group
Oncology Nursing Society
PA Education Association
Pediatric Policy Council
Pre-Health Dreamers
Rheumatology Nurses Society
Social Mission Alliance
Society for Academic Emergency Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Society of University Surgeons
South Asian Public Health Association
Student National Medical Association