



September 1, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

The over 60 undersigned members of the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) write in opposition of the \$91 million in cuts to certain programs within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)'s Title VII health professions and Title VIII nursing education programs, proposed in the House Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (HR 3358). HPNEC is an alliance of national organizations representing schools, communities, health professions, and students, who are dedicated to ensuring the health care workforce is trained to meet the needs of our country's diverse and aging population. As the appropriations process continues in the Senate, we urge you to reject the House cuts and provide \$580 million for these important programs in FY 2018.

The House bill cuts some of the only federally funded programs focused on improving the supply, distribution, and diversity of the health professions workforce with a focus on primary care and interdisciplinary training. Title VII and VIII programs have a long history of filling in gaps not addressed by traditional workforce channels, increasing access for rural, urban, and other underserved communities. The House bill completely eliminates the **Health Careers Opportunity Program**, an educational pipeline that recruits future health care professionals and ensures our next generation is prepared to enter health professions schools. The bill also cuts funding for the **Centers of Excellence program**, which helps to support health professions students from disadvantaged backgrounds, creating an important investment in students who are most likely to return to underserved communities to provide health care.

Title VII and VIII programs play a critical role in shaping the workforce to meet the nation's current and most pressing public health concerns. Examples of the responsiveness of these programs can be found in the **Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training** program, which ensures providers entering the workforce and those already practicing, have the education and training necessary to treat individuals suffering from mental health and substance use disorders, including those involving opioids. Similarly, **Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program** grantees are leaders in directly increasing the number of health care professionals

trained to deliver specialized care to our increasingly aging population. The cuts proposed by the House bill jeopardize the educational and training opportunities these programs provide to both aspiring and practicing health care professionals and would undermine their abilities to provide the workforce with individuals trained in high demand specialties.

As demand for health professionals grows in the face of current and impending shortages, a robust investment in educating and training the workforce is key to ensuring the health care workforce is adequately supplied. The House bill makes cuts to the **Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development** programs, which work to ensure a highly-educated pipeline can treat communities across the country, increase nurse faculty available to educate next generation nurses, and improves the diversity of the nursing workforce. Moreover, the House's proposal to consolidate some of the Title VIII programs risks diluting the critical mission of each. We urge you to sustain funding for each individual Title VIII program. The **Public Health and Preventive Medicine** program was completely eliminated in the House bill; grantees of this program provide funding for the only Graduate Medical Education (GME) spots available at the Departments of Health for residents specializing in public health.

The nation faces both a health care professional shortage and a growing, aging, and increasingly diverse population. The House L-HHS-ED bill fails to support the full range of health professions programs under Titles VII and VIII and will disrupt the efforts our country has made to fill workforce gaps with health care professionals who are adequately prepared to treat the United States' population. As the Senate moves forward with its appropriations process, we urge you to utilize the higher budget caps provided in the Senate to ensure the next generation of health professionals is equipped to address the nation's health care complexities, by allocating \$580 million for Titles VII and VIII in FY 2018.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of PAs
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Dental 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 Nurse Practitioners
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Dental Association

American Dental Education Association
American Dental Hygienists' Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Music Therapy Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Pediatric Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American society for Clinical Laboratory Science
American Society for Clinical Pathology
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Chiropractic Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Minority Health Professions
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses
Council on Social Work Education
Eldercare Workforce Alliance
Emergency Nurses Association
Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools
HIV Medicine Association
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
National AHEC Organization
National Association for Geriatric Education
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Athletic Trainer's Association
National Council for Diversity in the Health Professions
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Hispanic Medical Association
National League for Nursing
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
North American Primary Care Research Group
Oncology Nursing Society
Pediatric Policy Council

Physician Assistant Education Association
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine