

**Statement by the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition on FY 2027
Appropriations Submitted for the Record to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies – May 22, 2026**

The Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) is an alliance of over 90 national organizations representing schools, students, and health professionals dedicated to ensuring that the health workforce is trained to meet the varied needs of our entire population. Together, the members of HPNEC advocate for continued support for the health professions and nursing workforce development programs authorized under Titles VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act and administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). **For fiscal year (FY) 2027, HPNEC encourages the Subcommittee to adopt at least \$1.590 billion for the HRSA Titles VII health professions and VIII nursing workforce development programs. This increased investment is critical to ensuring a well-trained and high-quality health care workforce now and into the future.**

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. HRSA estimates that 106 million Americans currently live in federally designated primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), 74 million live in dental health HPSAs, and 154 million live in mental health HPSAs. At least 17,900 primary care practitioners, 12,300 dental health practitioners, and 7,600 mental health practitioners are needed to address these shortages and ensure access to care for these communities.¹ Further, the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) projects that the United States will face a persistent shortage of up to 86,000 physicians by 2036.² This is compounded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data that projects 189,100 openings for registered nurses³ and 32,700 openings for most Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs)⁴ each year, on average, over the decade.

The HRSA Titles VII and VIII programs successfully recruit, educate, train, and support physicians, physician assistants, nurses, dentists, geriatricians, mental and behavioral health providers, public health practitioners, social workers, pharmacists, and other frontline health care workers. These critical programs each play an integral role in educating current and future providers to work across the country in rural and underserved areas and advancing new delivery systems, interprofessional and integrated models of care.

The President's FY 2027 budget request proposes funding in line with FY 2026 levels for the Title VII Centers of Excellence, Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program, and Workforce Information and Analysis,⁵ and the Title VIII Nurse Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program under the proposed Administration for a Healthy America. Additionally, the

¹ HRSA. [Health Workforce Shortage Areas](#) (Accessed May 11, 2026)

² GlobalData Plc. *The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections From 2021 to 2036*. Washington, DC: AAMC; 2024.

³ BLS. [Occupational Outlook Handbook-Registered Nurses](#) (2026).

⁴ BLS. [Occupational Outlook Handbook- Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners](#) (2026).

⁵ Entitled as "Health Care Workforce Assessment" in the [FY 2027 AHA Congressional Justification](#).

budget recommends \$129.3 million for the Behavioral Health Workforce Development programs, a decrease of \$24.7 million below FY 2026 levels, and the proposed elimination of 14 existing Title VII and VIII programs. These cuts are particularly concerning given the pervasive public health challenges confronting our nation. If enacted, these proposed changes could have a detrimental impact as communities nationwide face health provider shortages. For this reason, **HPNEC strongly opposes these proposed modifications and cuts to the funding of the Title VII and VIII programs.**

The HPNEC comments below are organized around (I) Title VII Health Professions Training; (II) Title VII Primary and Specialty Care Workforce; (III) Title VII Interdisciplinary, Community-Based Linkages; (IV) Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs; (V) Title VII Oral Health; (VI) Title VII Public Health; and (VII) Title VII Workforce Information and Analysis. **HPNEC urges the Subcommittee to maintain and provide additional investments into all Title VII and VIII programs and to ensure such programs remain in place in the coming fiscal year and beyond.** These programs are critical to ensure that our health workforce is equipped to serve the nation’s ever-growing needs and prepared for the health care demands of tomorrow.

- I. Title VII Health Professions Training.*** The health professions training programs — including the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), Centers of Excellence, and Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students — support recruitment, education, training, and mentorship opportunities for high school, undergraduate, and graduate-level students across various backgrounds, including those from rural and economically or educationally disadvantaged areas. Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of such pipeline programs in strengthening students' academic records, improving test scores, and helping disadvantaged students pursue careers in the health professions. Investments in health professions training programs — like those supporting mentorship and training offered through the Centers of Excellence program, K-16 health outreach and education programs through HCOP, and scholarships to students who have financial need through Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students — help connect students from different backgrounds, including individuals from rural and urban areas, to health careers while also exposing providers to perspectives other than their own. Moreover, the Faculty Loan Repayment program supports health professionals in faculty positions to serve as mentors to the next generation of providers, fostering a workforce composed of varied backgrounds and perspectives.
- II. Title VII Primary Care Workforce.*** The Primary Care Workforce Programs fortify our nation’s health care workforce by training future clinicians, teachers, and researchers who practice as pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists, general internal medicine physicians, physician assistants, and family medicine practitioners. The Primary Care Training and Enhancement (PCTE) program encourages practice in primary care, promotes leadership in health care transformation, and enhances teaching in community-based settings.

Further, the Medical Student Education program supports the health care workforce by expanding training for medical students to become primary care clinicians, targeting higher education institutions in states with the highest primary care workforce shortages. The program also recruits and trains medical students from rural, tribal, and under-resourced communities, with the goal of retaining them in these communities.

The Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program is also designed to increase access to care for children with special health care and mental health needs by providing loan repayment to pediatric specialists and child mental health professionals who agree to serve in medically underserved areas or HPSAs.

III. *Title VII Interdisciplinary, Community-Based Linkages.* Title VII programs assess community needs to address workforce gaps and increase access to care, emphasizing interprofessional training to provide effective, coordinated care.

Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) support the recruitment and training of future physicians and other health professionals in rural areas, respond to local health needs, and serve as a crucial link between academic training programs and community-based outreach programs.

The Geriatrics Programs — the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) and the Geriatrics Academic Career Awards (GACA) — integrate geriatrics and primary care to promote coordinated and comprehensive care for older adults. **As the only federal program specifically designed to enhance the skills and training of health care teams serving older adults to improve care quality, safety, and reduce the cost of care, GWEP provides appropriate training for the entire care team.** GWEP targets training family caregivers, direct care workers, and health care professionals, such as physicians, nurses, social workers, pharmacists, and psychologists. With our nation's burgeoning population of older adults, we need a stronger and sustained federal commitment to our eldercare workforce. In addition, the GACA program supports the career development of individual junior faculty by providing clinical training in geriatrics.

The Behavioral Health Workforce Development Programs — such as Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET), Addiction Medicine Fellowship, Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program, Graduate Psychology Education (GPE), and Mental and Behavioral Health Programs — respond to changing delivery systems and models of care and address emerging health issues across rural and urban communities.

IV. *Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs.* Title VIII nursing workforce development programs provide federal support to address all aspects of nursing workforce demands, including education, practice, recruitment, and retention, focusing on the needs of rural and underserved communities where nursing care is critical to improving health. This includes the Advanced Nursing Education (ANE) program, which supports innovative clinical education opportunities for nurses and nursing students including in areas such as primary care, anesthesia, nurse midwifery, among others. Further, the Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention

program (NEPQR) helps meet changing demand in health care through transformative programs that enhance nursing education, improve the quality of patient care, increase nurse retention, and strengthen the nursing workforce. Additionally, the Nurse Corps recruits nursing students and nurses entering into practice at health care facilities facing a critical shortage of nurses. Other programs under Title VIII help recruit and retain students to the nursing profession by supporting bridge programs and accelerated nursing degree programs, addressing the education needs of nursing students, and supporting graduate students to serve as faculty.

V. Title VII Oral Health. The Oral Health Training programs increase access to high-quality dental health services in rural and disadvantaged communities and assist in expanding the dental primary care workforce in general, pediatric, and public health dentistry. For example, the Pre- and Post-doctoral Training programs support the planning, development, and operation of training for oral health care trainees, dental residents, practicing dentists, or other approved primary care dental trainees. The Dental Clinician Educator Career Development Program, Primary Care Dental Faculty Development Program, and Dental Faculty Loan Repayment Program also promote the development of primary care dental faculty and help enhance the recruitment and retention of dental and dental hygiene faculty. Moreover, the State Oral Health Workforce Improvement Grant Program supports accessible and quality oral health services within Dental Health HPSAs.

VI. Title VII Public Health. The Public Health Workforce Development programs support education and training in public health and preventive medicine. This includes the Preventive Medicine Residency Training Program, which supports medical training in preventive medicine and access to preventive services at community-based settings, and the Public Health Training Centers program, which supports graduate or specialized training focused on regional public health needs.

VII. Title VII Workforce Information and Analysis. Funding for Workforce Information and Analysis supports the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, the federal entity that collects, analyzes, and reports on U.S. health workforce data and provides high quality, research-based evidence used to help meet the nation's health care needs. The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis also oversees nine Health Workforce Research Centers that perform and disseminate research and data analysis on health workforce issues of national importance.

While HPNEC's members acknowledge the increasing demands and fiscal challenges facing appropriators, funding for HRSA's health and nursing workforce development programs is critical in bolstering a workforce that can respond to future health threats and challenges facing all Americans. **Therefore, HPNEC encourages the Subcommittee to provide at least \$1.590 billion in the FY 2027 appropriations bill for HRSA's Title VII and VIII programs to continue the nation's investment in our health workforce.**