

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2023

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

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

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$980 million for the Title VII health professions education and training programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). These programs support health care workforce development and education, train providers in interdisciplinary settings to respond to the needs of special and underserved populations, and increase minority representation in the health care workforce.

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 percent, and one in five Americans will be over the age of 65. Further, HRSA estimates that 99 million Americans already live in federally designated primary care Health Professions Shortage Areas (HPSAs), 70 million live in dental health HPSAs, and 158 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. The Title VII Workforce Information and Analysis program helps identify these future workforce needs as well the areas of greatest need to help target our resources where they will do the most good.

The Title VII health professions programs shape the future health workforce at all stages of the continuum through recruitment, education, training, and development. For example, Area Health Education Centers facilitate community-based training opportunities and lead to increases in the number of students from rural and other underrepresented communities enrolling in health professions schools and training in rural settings. In addition, as the need for more health providers grows, it is crucial that there are enough faculty to train the future health workforce. However, hiring and retaining qualified faculty has only become more difficult. The Title VII Faculty Loan Repayment incentivizes skilled providers to mentor the next generation and, in doing so, bolster the health workforce pipeline. Lastly, the Title VII programs complement and reinforce each other by targeting unique health care and workforce gaps — separately and in coordination — for example, by promoting training in interprofessional care across disciplines.

The COVID-19 pandemic, RSV, and monkeypox, on top of substance use, mental, and maternal health crises, have significantly 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 care system. At a time when the country is facing these unprecedented provider shortages and public health challenges, it is necessary to continue to support and strengthen our commitment to programs that advance our health care workforce such as:

- Area Health Education Centers (AHEC),
- Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training,
- Centers of Excellence (COE),
- Clinical Training in Interprofessional Practice,
- Faculty Loan Repayment,
- Geriatrics Training,
- Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP),
- Mental and Behavioral Health programs,
- Medical Student Education grants,
- Oral Health Training,
- Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment,
- Preventing Burnout in the Health Workforce,
- Primary Care Medicine,
- Public Health and Preventive Medicine,
- Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS), and
- Workforce Information and Analysis.

These education and training programs guide current and aspiring health professionals to high-demand careers in areas of greatest need. We greatly appreciate your support for these programs to ensure that the distribution, quality, and diversity of the health professions workforce continue to improve, and that the workforce is prepared to meet the country's evolving and emerging health care needs. As such, we urge you to include \$980 million for these programs in FY 2024. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

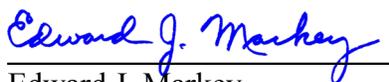
Sincerely,



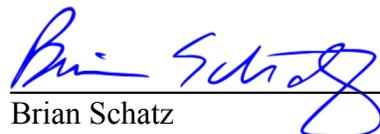
Jack Reed
United States Senator



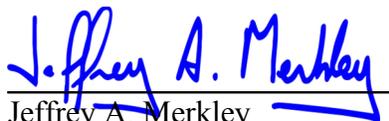
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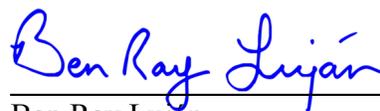
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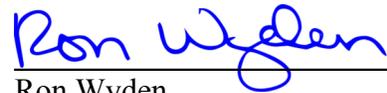
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