

**Statement by the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition**  
**Prepared for the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human**  
**Services, Education, and Related Agencies**  
**Addressing FY 2020 Appropriations for the Department of Health and Human Services**  
**June 3, 2019**

The Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) is an alliance of nearly 70 national organizations representing schools, students, health professionals, and communities dedicated to ensuring that the health care workforce is trained to meet the needs of our diverse population. Together, the members of HPNEC advocate for adequate and 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) 2020, [HPNEC](#) encourages the subcommittee to adopt at least \$690 million for current HRSA Titles VII and VIII programs.*

HRSA's Title VII health professions and Title VIII nursing workforce development programs are structured to allow grantees to test educational innovations, respond to changing delivery systems and models of care, and address timely health threats in their communities. Titles VII and VIII programs emphasize interprofessional education and training, by bringing together knowledge and skills across disciplines to provide effective, efficient and coordinated care. Through scholarships, loan repayment programs, grants and contracts to academic institutions, students and non-profit organizations, HRSA's workforce development programs fill the gaps in the supply of health professionals not met by traditional market forces.

Our nation is becoming increasingly diverse and faces a rapidly growing and aging population. Now more than ever support is needed for Title VII and Title VIII programs that improve the supply, distribution, and diversity of the workforce – to ensure health professionals are prepared to address the health care challenges of today and the future.

**Primary Care Workforce** – The Primary Care Medicine Programs expand the primary care workforce, including general pediatrics, general internal medicine, family medicine, and physician assistants through the following programs: Primary Care Training and Enhancement (PCTE); academic units for PCTE; PCTE: Training Primary Care Champions; and Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry Career Development. The Primary Care programs are also intended to encourage health professionals to work in underserved areas. In fiscal year 2016, 49% of PCTE program completers were underrepresented minorities and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Primary Care Dentistry program invests in expanding programs in dental primary care for pediatric, public health, and general dentistry. The Pre- and Postdoctoral Training, Residency Training, Faculty Development, and Faculty Loan Repayment programs encourage integrating dentistry into primary care.

**Diversity Pipeline Programs** – HRSA Titles VII and VIII programs play an important role in improving the diversity of the health care workforce and connecting students to health careers by supporting recruitment, education, training, and mentorship opportunities.

HRSA's diversity training programs support aspiring health professions students throughout the educational pipeline, helping to ensure a culturally competent health care workforce, including. Diversity programs include the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), Centers of Excellence (COE), Faculty Loan Repayment, Nursing Workforce Diversity, and Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS). Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of such pipeline programs in strengthening students' academic records, improving test scores, and helping minority and disadvantaged students pursue careers in the health professions. Title VII diversity pipeline programs reached thousands of students in the 2016-2017 academic year, with SDS graduating 2,811 students and COE reaching more than 6,800 health professionals; 55% of which were located in medically underserved communities.

Title VIII's Nursing Workforce Diversity Program is intended to increase nursing education opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including racial and ethnic minorities who are underrepresented among registered nurses. The program supports disadvantaged students through stipends and scholarships, and a variety of pre-entry and advanced education preparation. In academic year 2016-2017, the program trained 4,416 students, 100% of whom were either underrepresented minorities and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Interdisciplinary, Community Health Linkages** – Support for community-based training of health professionals in rural and urban underserved areas is funded through Title VII. By assessing the needs of the communities they serve, these programs are well positioned to fill gaps in the workforce and increase access to care for all populations. The programs emphasize interprofessional education and training, bringing together knowledge and skills across disciplines to provide effective, efficient, and coordinated care.

Programs such as Teaching Health Center Development; Graduate Psychology Education; Opioid Workforce Enhancement Program; Mental and Behavioral Health Education and Training; Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET); and Allied Health Training work directly with members of local communities to help meet their immediate health needs.

The community-based training programs are structured to allow grantees to test educational innovations, respond to changing delivery systems and models of care, and address timely topics in their communities. Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), which support workforce development and training for medical and public health professionals in rural areas, provided continuing education to 214,789 practicing health professionals across the country.

Public Health Workforce Development programs support education and training in public health and preventive medicine through different initiatives, including the only funding for physicians to work in state and local departments of health. In academic year 2016-2017, Public Health Workforce grantees delivered unique continuing education courses to 226,635 practicing professionals in the workforce.

**Workforce Information and Analysis** – The Workforce Information and Analysis program supports the compilation and analysis of data on the nation's health workforce, including

longitudinal evaluation of the Title VII and Title VIII programs through the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis and the Regional Centers for Health Workforce Analysis.

**Geriatrics Workforce Development** – Title VII Geriatric Workforce programs integrate geriatrics and primary care to provide coordinated and comprehensive care for older adults. The geriatrics programs provide training across the provider continuum (students, faculty, providers, direct service workers, patients, families, and lay and family caregivers), focusing on interprofessional and team-based care and on academic community partnerships to address gaps in health care for older adults. To advance the training of the current workforce, the Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) provided 1,578 unique continuing education courses, including 467 on Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia, to 173,078 faculty. In academic year 2016-2017 alone, Title VII’s GWEP trained 30,082 students and fellows in geriatric-specific degree programs, field placements, and fellowships.

**Nursing Workforce Development** – Title VIII 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 rural and medically underserved communities. These programs include Advanced Nursing Education; Nursing Workforce Diversity; Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention; NURSE Corps; and Nurse Faculty Loan Program. In the 2016-2017 academic year, the Title VIII Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship and Title VIII Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship programs supported more than 4,595 nursing and nurse anesthesia students, all of whom received clinical training in primary care in medically underserved communities and/or rural settings.

HPNEC is grateful for the House of Representatives providing \$680 million for Title VII and Title VIII programs, and an additional \$55 million for the new Loan Repayment Program for Substance Use Disorder Treatment Work, the Mental and substance Use Disorder Workforce Training Demonstration, and Nurse Practitioner Optional Fellowship Program. These programs are essential to ensuring we have a trained health workforce to treat patients who are affected by substance use disorder. While we support the inclusion of these programs into Titles VII and VIII, it is imperative that they are an expansion of Titles VII and VIII and are not funded at the expense of current programs.

While HPNEC’s members acknowledge the increasing demands and fiscal challenges facing appropriators, funding for HRSA’s workforce development programs is critical in creating a culturally competent health workforce that meets the needs of all Americans. Therefore, HPNEC encourages the subcommittee to adopt at least a \$690 million for HRSA’s current Title VII and VIII programs — and separate funding for any new programs — to continue the nation’s investment in our health workforce.