

**Statement by the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition on  
FY 2021 Appropriations for the Department of Health and Human Services  
Submitted for the Record to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health  
and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies – May 22, 2020**

The Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) is an alliance of 80 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) 2021, HPNEC encourages the subcommittee to adopt at least \$790 million for 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 timely address health threats, such as COVID-19. Titles VII and VIII programs are structured to respond to changing delivery systems and models of care, such as telehealth, while addressing immediate health threats in all communities. Through scholarships, loan repayment programs, grants, and contracts to academic institutions, students, and non-profit organizations, HRSA's workforce development programs address health threats in all communities by filling the gaps in the supply of health professionals not met by traditional market forces.

As our population grows, ages, and becomes increasingly diverse, our health professions workforce must adapt to the ever-changing health needs of patients from all backgrounds in communities across the country. 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.

**Public Health** – Public Health Workforce Development trains 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. These 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 AY 2018-2019, Public Health Workforce grantees delivered unique continuing education courses more than 226,500 practicing professionals in the workforce.

**Diversity Pipeline Programs** – Title VII and Title VIII programs play an essential role in improving the diversity of the health workforce and connecting students to health careers by supporting recruitment, education, training, and mentorship opportunities. With public health issues, such as COVID-19, disproportionately impacting racial and ethnic minorities, these programs recruit and train a diverse and culturally competent health workforce, tasked to mitigate health disparities.

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 over 10,000 students in the 2018-2019 academic year (AY), with SDS graduating nearly 1,400 students and COE reaching more than 5,600 health professionals; 56% of which were located in medically underserved communities.

Title VIII's Nursing Workforce Diversity Program increases nursing education opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, through stipends and scholarships, and a variety of pre-entry and advanced education preparation. In AY 2018-19, the program supported more than 11,000 students, with approximately 46% of the training sites located in underserved communities

**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 AY 2018-2019, 61% of PCTE programs were located in medically underserved communities and 30% in rural areas.

The Medical Student Education program, which supports the health care workforce by expanding training for medical students to become primary care clinicians, targets institutions of higher education in states with the highest primary care workforce shortages. By providing grants to institutions, the program develops partnerships among institutions, federally recognized tribes, and community-based organizations to train medical students to provide primary care that improves health outcomes for those living in rural and other underserved communities.

**Interdisciplinary, Community Based 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 local communities they serve, Title VII programs can fill gaps in the workforce and increase access to care for all populations. The programs emphasize interprofessional education and training, and using telehealth to bring together knowledge and skills across disciplines to provide effective, efficient, and coordinated care.

Programs such as Graduate Psychology Education (GPE); Opioid Workforce Enhancement Program; Mental and Behavioral Health; Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET); and Allied Health Training test educational innovations, respond to changing delivery systems and models of care, and timely address emerging health issues in their communities. The BHWET and Mental and Behavioral Health programs, which include GPE, provides training to expand access to mental and behavioral health services for vulnerable and underserved populations. In AY 2018-19, nearly 50 percent of all BHWET and GPE grantees provided substance use disorder treatment services.

Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) support the recruitment and training future physicians in rural areas, as well as providing interdisciplinary health care delivery sites, which respond to community health needs. In AY 2018-19, AHECs supported 192,000 pipeline program participants, provided over 34,000 clinical training rotations for health professions trainees.

Title VII Geriatric Workforce programs integrate geriatrics and primary care to provide coordinated and comprehensive care for older adults. These 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 1,342 unique continuing education courses to 187,955 faculty and practicing professionals in AY 2018-19, including 445 courses on Alzheimer's and dementia-related diseases

**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 AY 2018-2019, the Title VIII Advanced Education Nursing programs supported more than 9,000 nursing students in primary care, anesthesia, nurse midwifery, and other specialty care, all of whom received clinical training in primary care in medically underserved communities and/or rural settings.

**Oral Health** – 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.

**Workforce Information and Analysis** – The Workforce Information and Analysis program Provides funding for the National Center for Health Workforce Analysis as well as grants to seven Health Workforce Research Centers across the country 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 workforce development programs is critical in creating a culturally competent workforce that can respond to current and future public health threats facing all Americans. Therefore, HPNEC encourages the subcommittee to adopt at least a \$790 million for HRSA's Title VII and VIII programs to continue the nation's investment in our health workforce.