

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2016

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We respectfully request that you maintain a strong commitment to the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, administered by HRSA) in Fiscal Year 2017 as you work to complete your Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

It is critical that the nation prepares now for the current and impending strains on our healthcare system. Emerging care delivery models, a growing number of patients with multiple chronic conditions, an aging healthcare workforce, and the challenge of providing care in underserved areas require a strong investment in the nursing workforce.

Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) provide high-quality, cost-effective care across the country. As our nation's healthcare system transforms and more services are provided outside the hospital walls, nurses must be educated for these opportunities and challenges. This is of particular concern with respect to the recruitment and retention of RNs and APRNs in rural and underserved communities. Title VIII programs directly address this issue. For example, the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program and Scholarship Program provide support for students, practicing nurses, and nurse faculty who agree to serve full-time in areas experiencing nursing shortages, thus helping to connect these high-quality clinicians to patients who need them most. In Academic Year 2014-2015, these programs supported almost 1200 students. Moreover, 55% of Loan Repayment Program participants went on to extend their service contracts to continue working in a Critical Shortage Facility.

Federal funding must keep pace with inflation as educational costs rise for both the student and the institution. The success of Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs is crucial to supporting the supply and distribution of nurses to meet our nation's healthcare needs.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our request as your Subcommittee faces a challenging fiscal climate. A strong investment for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2017 is a worthwhile commitment to the nursing workforce, patient well-being, and the sustainability of our nation's healthcare system.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Lois Capps
LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress

Richard Hanna
RICHARD HANNA
Member of Congress

Dwight D.

Bethford

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