

April 25, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N.
Administrator
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Secretary Sebelius and Dr. Wakefield:

The 121 undersigned organizations write to thank you for your longstanding commitment to enhance the health care workforce commensurate with the needs of the nation. As you prepare the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)'s fiscal year (FY) 2011 spending plan for implementing P.L. 112-10, we strongly encourage you to continue prioritizing the health care workforce by rejecting proposed cuts to programs within HRSA's Bureau of Health Professions (BHP).

As you know, the Bureau of Health Professions administers critical programs that help shape the workforce to respond to existing and emerging health care challenges. Through support for education and training of health professionals across disciplines, BHP programs cultivate the next generation of health care providers, including those that care for the most vulnerable, underserved populations. These programs fill the gaps in the private sector and complement efforts across the federal government; indeed, success of all HRSA objectives relies on the availability of well-prepared health professionals like those that graduate from BHP-supported programs.

Many of our organizations support multiple BHP initiatives, while others participate in specific programs. **We all share a common concern, however, that cuts to BHP will disrupt ongoing efforts to augment the health care workforce and will impede patient access to quality health care.** Among such programs:

- *Title VII health professions education and training programs*, which enhance the supply, diversity, and distribution of the health care workforce. With their emphasis on primary care and interdisciplinary education, for nearly 50 years the programs have been promoting innovative educational approaches for a range of health professionals, including primary care physicians; physician assistants; dentists; nurses; social workers; allied, public, and mental health providers; and other health professionals. They equip health professionals to adapt to new, improved models of care; facilitate training opportunities in rural and underserved settings and communities; support efforts to recruit and retain a diverse, culturally competent workforce; and strengthen the health professions pipeline, from K-12 to faculty development and across the full range of disciplines.
- *Title VIII nursing workforce development programs*, which provide the largest dedicated source of federal funding for nursing education. The high quality care provided by registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses continues to be in demand, particularly as our health care system focuses on multi-disciplinary approaches to primary care. Moreover, nursing schools continue to face capacity barriers that prevent expanding enrollments needed to build the nursing pipeline. The Title VIII programs help meet these workforce needs by offering support for both education programs and individual students; bolstering nursing education from entry-level through graduate study; and providing financial aid incentives to practice in rural and underserved communities.
- *Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME)*, which provides critical federal graduate medical education support for freestanding children's hospitals, similar to the support that other teaching hospitals receive through Medicare. The program provides essential support for the future primary care workforce for our nation's children and for pediatric specialty care, the greatest workforce shortage in children's health care. CHGME hospitals train 40 percent of all pediatricians (mostly in general pediatrics), 43 percent of pediatric specialists, and the majority of pediatric researchers. They also provide required pediatric rotations for residents in general internal medicine and family medicine.

- *Workforce Studies* under Title VII and the office of *Shortage Designation*, which serve to compile, synthesize, and report data on the supply and demand of health professionals. From a designation as a local health professions shortage area to studies of regional and national workforce trends, these essential federal functions arm policymakers and the communities they serve with reliable, comprehensive analyses of the health workforce landscape. These initiatives enable better-informed policy decisions for more than 30 programs at HRSA and throughout the federal government.

Each of these programs constitutes a relatively small portion of the federal budget, yet their impact is both far-reaching and deeply felt, particularly among the most underserved communities across the country. As a consequence, even seemingly moderate decreases in funding can devastate the ability of the programs to achieve their stated goals.

Health professionals are the foundation of our nation's health care system. While we recognize the challenging budget environment, we strongly urge you not to jeopardize patients' access to care through cuts that will destabilize BHP's efforts to bolster the health care workforce. Please prioritize funding for the Bureau of Health Professions in HRSA's FY 2011 spending plan.

Thank you again for your support, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to advance HRSA's mission and improve the health and well-being of the country.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Dental Education Association
American Holistic Nurses Association
American Medical Student Association
American Nurses Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychological Association
American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of State & Territorial Directors of Nursing (ASTDN)
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
BJC HealthCare
BLYTHEDALE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
California Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC)
California Children's Hospital Association
California Foundation for Advancement of Addiction Professionals (CFAAP)
Cedars-Sinai Health System
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
Children's Hospital & Medical Center (Omaha, Neb.)
Children's Medical Center of Dallas
Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics (Kansas City, Mo.)
Children's National Medical Center
Children's Hospital Boston
Children's Hospital Central California
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC
Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
CHOC Children's Hospital
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
Columbia University Medical Center
Connecticut Children's Medical Center
Council of Accredited MPH Programs (CAMP)
Council on Social Work Education
Creighton University
DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan
Emergency Nurses Association
Florida Association of Children's Hospitals
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)
Le Bonheur Children's Hospital
Long Beach Memorial/Miller Children's Hospital
Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford
Michigan State University
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
National AHEC Organization
National Association for Geriatric Education
National Association of Children's Hospitals
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Geriatric Education Centers
National Association of Medical Minority Educators, Inc. (NAMME)
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)

National Association of Social Workers
National Coalition of Ethnic and Minority Nurse Associations
National Council for Diversity in the Health Professions
National Hispanic Medical Association
National League for Nursing
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.
Nationwide Children's Hospital
New York University
North American Primary Care Research Group
Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Penn State College of Medicine
Physician Assistant Education Association
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Primary Children's Medical Center, of Salt Lake City, Utah
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Public Health Education
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
St Louis Children's Hospital
Stanford University School of Medicine
Stony Brook University Medical Center
The American College of Nurse Practitioners
The Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY)
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital
UC Davis Health System
University of California, Irvine, School of Medicine
University of California, Riverside
University of Iowa Health Care
University of Kansas Medical Center
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska Medical Center
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
University of Rochester Medical Center
University of Utah Health Sciences
University of Washington School of Medicine
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
University of Wisconsin System