



March 17, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Allied Health Workforce Appropriations Request for HRSA

Dear Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the Appropriations Committees:

The undersigned organizations representing more than 600,000 providers write to request a federal appropriation to support the allied health workforce. Our organizations respectfully request a FY2024 programmatic appropriation of \$8 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration allied health workforce program aimed at increasing educational opportunities in physical therapy, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, audiology, and speech-language pathology for individuals who are underrepresented in such professions.

The PREVENT Pandemics Act, which passed as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, expanded the allied health workforce program within HRSA to increase educational opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or individuals who are underrepresented in our members' professions. Providing this appropriation will allow HRSA to provide scholarships and stipends to accredited higher education programs to recruit qualified individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, including persons with disabilities, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and racial and ethnic minorities.

Supporting this critical workforce program will help strengthen and expand the comprehensive use of evidence-based strategies shown to increase the recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation of students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. These strategies include outreach to the community, creating or expanding mentorship and tutoring programs, and providing scholarships and stipends to students.

The health care workforce is facing significant stresses, and the need to boost recruitment is critical now more than ever to improve access to high-quality care for rural and medically underserved populations.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our support for funding and implementation of this important health care workforce program. Should you have any questions, please contact Steve Kline with the American Physical Therapy Association at stevekline@apta.org. Thank for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Audiology

American Association for Respiratory Care

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

National Rural Health Association