



Maintain and Expand Appropriations for Title VII & VIII Health Professions Funding

Action Requested: Support continued and increased health professions appropriations for FY 2018.

The President's FY 2018 budget blueprint proposes to eliminate \$403 million in health professions and nursing training programs. Combined the Title VII and VIII programs receive nearly \$500 million in annual funding — making it appear this cut will decimate these critical programs. While specific details are not provided in the President's budget blueprint, the proposal indicates it will fund health workforce activities that promote service in health professional shortage areas.

Background on Title VII and PAs: Title VII of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act is the only continuing federal funding available to PA educational programs. PA education grants funded through the Primary Care Training & Enhancement Program (PCTE) have proven successful in training new PAs. For instance, the Physician Assistant Training in Primary Care program supported the education of 4,390 PA students in the 2014-2015 school year (up from 4,071 in 2013-2014). Of those students, 29% were minorities and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds, and 13% were from rural areas. Fifty-eight percent of the institutions which were awarded grants through this program were focused on primary care, and the majority of them were in rural or medically underserved areas. These statistics clearly show that the PCTE program is living up to its intended purposes: encouraging students from under-represented groups to attend PA school and increasing PA practice in rural and medically underserved areas.

Title VII has been instrumental in allowing increased numbers of PA students to pursue their education. However, this funding also helps PA programs expand opportunities for clinical rotations in rural and medically underserved areas. The PCTE program benefits PA students, but just as important, it benefits local communities that would otherwise have limited access to healthcare providers. It is common for new PAs to remain in the area in which they completed their education. A review of PA graduates from 1990-2009 showed that PAs who graduated from programs supported by Title VII were 47% more likely to work in rural health clinics than graduates of other programs.

AAPA Recommendation: The American Academy of PAs (AAPA) joins with the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) in asking Congress to increase funding by approximately \$80 million over current funding levels for a total of \$580 million in FY 2018 for the Title VII health professions and Title VIII nursing workforce development programs. AAPA requests \$12 million from this account to be used for PA education programs. Continued funding for PA educational programs under Title VII is essential to improving access to healthcare providers for underserved communities.

03/28/2017