

May 21, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby and Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

The undersigned groups agree that an unstable fiscal environment will exacerbate the country's shortage of health professionals and further restrict patient access to care at a time of growing demand. As Congress considers the Fiscal Year 2014 budget and a balanced approach to deficit reduction, we urge you to support the President's budget request to fully fund the National Health Care Workforce Commission at the very modest sum of \$3 million. In light of our large-scale fiscal challenges, the Commission's expertise will be critical as Congress strives to channel limited available resources optimally while protecting patient access to care.

As the United States grapples with a deficit of physicians and other health professionals, the country lacks a comprehensive strategy to address these critical shortages. The Commission was designed as an independent body to study and advise policymakers on a broad range of workforce-related topics, including national workforce priorities and goals, current and projected workforce supply, and assessments of current and needed education and training activities to meet the demand for health care workers. Moreover, the Commission was tasked with analyzing and making recommendations to eliminate barriers surrounding disciplines and professions where demand is not being met, such as shortages of primary care practitioners; pediatric and adult specialists; and mental, dental, and public health professionals. Without an explicit appropriation, the Commission has not been able to identify obstacles that may create and exacerbate workforce shortages and improve coordination on the federal, state and local levels. This entity's charter has become more critical as insurance coverage is expanded and the population ages, resulting in greater demand for care.

The undersigned organizations are aware of the dire fiscal situation this country faces and of the need to make difficult choices. However, we believe it is critical to fund programs such as the Commission to help this country regain fiscal stability. The National Health Care Workforce Commission will provide Congress with a necessary and comprehensive analysis of workforce issues across disciplines so lawmakers can appropriately assess the difficult choices related to

health spending, rather than diverting resources indiscriminately from programs most in need, like those for physician and other health professional training.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical matter.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Medical Student Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Osteopathic Association
American Podiatric Medical Association
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Chiropractic Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions
Association of Schools of Public Health
College of American Pathologists
National AHEC Organization
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
North American Primary Care Research Group
Physician Assistant Education Association
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine