



Association of Academic Health Centers®
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June 11, 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, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

The undersigned organizations understand the complexity of the nation's current fiscal reality and recognize the need to make the difficult decisions necessary for a balanced approach to deficit reduction. As the Committee on Appropriations moves forward in the appropriations process for the FY 2014 budget, we urge you to include the modest \$3 million requested in President Obama's budget for the National Health Care Workforce Commission (NHCWC). We strongly believe that the nation's health care system is in serious need of an integrated, comprehensive, forward-thinking, national health workforce policy - and that the NHCWC is the most expedient route to this policy.

As the 2014 deadline for all individuals to have health insurance approaches, millions more people will enter a health care system that is already struggling to meet current needs. In addition to dramatic changes in the nation's growing population of elderly and growing burden of managing chronic diseases, scientific progress and technological innovation, in combination with a new wave of health care payment models, are putting considerable pressures on an already struggling health workforce. The solution is more complex than simply increasing the numbers of health care providers. It involves the difficult issues of the needed specialty and geographic mix of providers that meets the country's needs. In addition, the various factors at play require a health workforce that is more culturally diverse, trained to work collaboratively in interprofessional teams, and technologically savvy. In short, the health care system is in a state of flux, and we are past due in preparing our current and future health workforce for the new system emerging.

The National Health Care Workforce Commission was established as an independent entity designed to coordinate across federal agencies and develop recommendations to Congress regarding 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. Unfortunately, while the members of the Commission

were named in 2010, the Commission has been unable to meet or begin their crucial work due to a lack of an appropriation from Congress.

Health workforce issues cannot be left on the backburner. The success of the nation's evolving health care system rests on the development of a meaningful health workforce policy. The National Health Workforce Commission is a crucial step if we wish to ensure the health and well-being of American citizens.

Thank you for your consideration on this critically important issue.

Sincerely,

Arizona Health Sciences Center
East Carolina University
East Tennessee State University
Georgetown University Medical Center
Meharry Medical College
Mercer University Health Sciences Center
Northeast Ohio Medical University
NYU Langone Medical Center
Oregon Health & Science University
Penn State Hershey Medical Center
Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
University at Buffalo Academic Health Center
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
University of California Davis Health System
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Iowa
University of Massachusetts Medical School
University of Michigan Health System
University of Missouri-Columbia
University of Nebraska Medical Center
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
University of South Alabama
University of Utah Health Sciences Center
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
Wake Forest School of Medicine
Yale University