

Friends of HRSA

Jordan Wolfe, Manager of Government Relations, American Public Health Association
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House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

The Friends of HRSA coalition is a nonpartisan coalition of nearly 170 national organizations representing tens of millions of public health and health care professionals, academicians and consumers invested in the Health Resources and Services Administration's mission to improve health outcomes and achieve health equity. We are pleased to submit our request of **at least \$9.8 billion for the Health Resources and Services Administration in FY 2023**. We are grateful for the increases provided for HRSA programs in FY 2022 and for the emergency supplemental funding to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, but HRSA's discretionary budget authority is far too low to effectively address the nation's current public health and health care needs. We urge Congress to continue efforts to build upon these investments to strengthen all of HRSA's programs.

HRSA's 90-plus programs and more than 3,000 grantees support tens of millions of geographically isolated, economically or medically vulnerable people, in every state and U.S. territory, to achieve improved health outcomes by increasing access to quality health care and services; fostering a health care workforce able to address current and emerging needs; enhance population health and address health disparities through community partnerships; and promote transparency and accountability within the health care system. The agency is a national leader in improving the health of Americans by addressing the supply, distribution and diversity of health professionals and supporting training in contemporary practices, and providing high-quality health services to populations who may otherwise not have access to health care.

HRSA programs work in coordination with each other to maximize resources and leverage efficiencies. For example, Area Health Education Centers, a health professions training program, was originally authorized at the same time as the National Health Service Corps to increase the number of primary care providers at health centers and other direct providers of health care services for underserved areas and populations. AHECs play an integral role to recruit providers into primary health careers, diversify the workforce and develop a passion for service to the underserved among future providers.

HRSA grantees also play an active role in addressing emerging health challenges. For example, HRSA's grantees provide outreach, education, prevention, screening and treatment services for populations affected by health emergencies such as the opioid epidemic. However, much of this work required additional funding to increase capacity in health centers, support National Health Service Corps providers to deliver relevant care and expand rural health services. Strong, sustained funding would allow HRSA to quickly and effectively respond to emerging and unanticipated future health needs across the U.S., while continuing to address persistent health challenges.

HRSA programs and grantees are providing innovative and successful solutions to some of the nation's greatest health care challenges including the rise in maternal mortality, the severe shortage of health professionals, the high cost of health care, and behavioral health issues related to substance use disorder – including opioid misuse. We recommend Congress build upon the important increases they provided for HRSA programs in FY 2022 and provide at least \$9.8 billion for HRSA's total discretionary budget authority in FY 2023. Additional funding will

allow HRSA to pave the way for new achievements and continue supporting critical HRSA programs, including:

- HRSA supports more than 13,500 community health center sites which provide high quality primary care services to nearly 29 million people and reduce barriers such as cost, lack of insurance, distance and language for their patients.
- HRSA supports the health workforce across the entire training continuum by strengthening the workforce and connecting skilled professionals to communities in need. Programs such as the Public Health Training Centers assess and respond to critical workforce needs through training, technical assistance and student support.
- HRSA's maternal and child health programs support patient-centered, evidence-based programs that optimize health, minimize disparities and improve health promotion and health care access for medically and economically vulnerable women, infants and children.
- HRSA's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides medical care and treatment services to over half a million people living with HIV. Ryan White programs effectively engage clients in comprehensive care and treatment, including increasing access to HIV medication, which has resulted in 89.4% of clients achieving viral suppression, compared to just 65.5% of all people living with HIV nationwide.
- HRSA supports healthcare systems and programs that access and availability of lifesaving bone marrow, cord blood and donor organs for transplantation. Additionally, the Healthcare Systems Bureau supports poison control centers, which contribute to significantly decreasing a patient's length of stay and save the federal government \$1.8 billion each year in medical costs and lost productivity.
- HRSA supports community- and state-based solutions to improve rural community health by focusing on quality improvement, increasing health care access, coordination of care and integration of services that are uniquely designed to meet the needs of rural communities.
- The Title X Family Planning program reduces unintended pregnancy rates, limits transmission of sexually transmitted infections and increases early detection of breast and cervical cancer by ensuring access to family planning and related preventive health services to millions of women, men and adolescents.
- HRSA also supports training, technical assistance and resource development to assist public health and health care professionals to better serve individuals and communities impacted by intimate partner violence.
- HRSA is well positioned to respond to infectious disease outbreaks and has been active in the COVID-19 pandemic response, awarding billions of dollars to health centers to administer COVID-19 tests and reimbursing over \$18 billion to providers for testing and treatment provided to uninsured individuals.

The nation faces a shortage of health professionals and a growing and aging population which will demand more health care. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic reaffirmed the critical nature of a robust workforce in responding to public health emergencies. HRSA is well positioned to address these issues and to continue building on the agency's many successes, but a stronger commitment of resources is necessary to effectively do so. We urge you to consider HRSA's central role in strengthening the nation's health and support a funding level of **at least \$9.8 billion for HRSA's discretionary budget authority in FY 2023.**