

Friends of the Health Resources and Services Administration

c/o American Public Health Association

www.friendsofhrsa.org

December 19, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Baldwin and Ranking Members DeLauro and Capito:

The undersigned 86 members of the Friends of HRSA coalition and other supporting organizations urge you to quickly finalize **the FY 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill with the highest possible level of funding for the Health Resources and Services Administration. Earlier this year, our coalition wrote to the leaders of the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations subcommittees urging them to provide at least \$10.5 billion for HRSA in FY 2024. While we understand that the debt ceiling agreement from earlier this year has limited the resources available to the Appropriations Committees since our original request, we continue to urge you to prioritize HRSA funding and to oppose the inclusion of any cuts or partisan policy riders related to any of the agency's programs.** Strong funding for HRSA is critical to supporting all of HRSA's activities and programs, which are essential to protect the health of our communities. It is essential that Congress fully finalize the FY 2024 process and avoid the extremely damaging sequestration cuts that would undermine nondefense discretionary programs, including those at HRSA. Due to years of underfunding, many HRSA programs have not received the funding that is needed to address the many health challenges we face as a nation, limiting their ability to provide communities with the support, care and workforce that they depend on. Additional funding will allow HRSA to fill preventive and primary health care gaps, support urgent and long-term public health workforce needs and build upon the achievements of HRSA's more than 90 programs and more than 3,000 grantees. We also believe that it is critical for Congress to quickly finalize the FY 2024 appropriations process to avoid further lengthy continuing resolutions that bring uncertainty and make it more difficult for the agency and its grantees to protect the public's health.

Friends of HRSA is a nonpartisan coalition of national organizations representing public health and health care professionals, academicians, and consumers invested in HRSA's mission to improve health and achieve health equity. The coalition advocates for strengthening funding levels for HRSA's discretionary budget authority to enable the agency to keep pace with the persistent and changing health demands of the nation's growing, aging and diversifying population and constantly evolving public health and health care system.

HRSA is a national leader in improving the health of Americans by addressing the supply, distribution and diversity of health professionals, supporting training in contemporary public health practices and providing quality health services to the nation's most vulnerable populations. This includes people living with HIV/AIDS, pregnant women, mothers and their families and those otherwise unable to access high quality health care. HRSA also oversees organ, bone marrow and cord blood donation, compensates individuals harmed by vaccination and maintains databases that protect against health care malpractice, waste, fraud and abuse.

Investing in programs that keep people healthy is important for the vitality of our nation. HRSA programs have been successful in improving the health of people at highest risk for poor health outcomes. The agency supports efforts that increase access to quality care, better leverage existing investments and achieve improved health outcomes at a lower cost. For example:

- HRSA supports more than 14,000 community health center sites which provide high quality primary care services to more than 30 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 89.7% of clients achieving viral suppression, compared to just 64.6% of all people living with HIV nationwide.
- HRSA supports healthcare programs that increase access to lifesaving bone marrow, cord blood and donor organs for transplantation. The Healthcare Systems Bureau supports poison control centers which contribute to decreasing patient's length of stay in a hospital and save the government \$1.8 billion annually 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, which served 2.6 million people in 2022, reduces unintended pregnancy rates, limits transmission of sexually transmitted infections and increases early detection of breast and cervical cancer by increasing access to family planning and related preventive health services for adults and adolescents in communities across the country. 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 providers who offer COVID-19 care 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 the highest possible level of funding for HRSA's discretionary budget authority in FY 2024.**

Please contact Jordan Wolfe at jordan.wolfe@apha.org or 202-777-2513 with any questions regarding our request.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Community Health
Alabama Public Health Association
Alaska Public Health Association
Allergy & Asthma Network
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
American College of Physicians
American Counseling Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society of Transplantation
Association for Clinical and Translational Sciences
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Pathology Chairs
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Choose Healthy Life
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association
District of Columbia Public Health Association
Epilepsy Foundation
Florida Public Health Association
Futures Without Violence
Gerontological Society of America
Hawaii Public Health Association
Health Resources in Action

Healthy Teen Network
HIV Medicine Association
HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute
Hope Charities
Illinois Public Health Association
Indiana Public Health Association
Iowa Public Health Association
Kansas Public Health Association
Maine Public Health Association
March of Dimes
Minnesota Public Health Association
Missouri Public Health Association
Morehouse School of Medicine
MS Public Health Association
NASTAD
National AHEC Organization
National Alliance for HIV Education and Workforce Development (NAHEWD)
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Council for Diversity in Health Professions
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Healthy Start Association
National Kidney Foundation
National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP)
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Rural Health Association
Nevada Public Health Association
New Hampshire Public Health Association
New York State Public Health Association
Oregon Public Health Association
PA Education Association
Pennsylvania Public Health Association
Prevent Blindness
Project Sleep
Rhode Island Public Health Association
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
School-Based Health Alliance
South Carolina Public Health Association
South Dakota Public Health Association (SDPHA)
Southern California Public Health Association
Tennessee Public Health Association
The AIDS Institute
The National Institute for Children's Health Quality
Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine
UMass Chan Medical School
Utah Public Health Association
Vermont Public Health Association
Virginia Public Health Association
Washington State Public Health Association

Wisconsin Public Health Association

Cc: House Appropriations Committee
Senate Appropriations Committee