

September xx, 2017

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Washington, DC

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Washington, DC

The Honorable Michael Burgess
Chairman
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, DC

The Honorable Gene Green
Ranking Member
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, DC

Dear Chairmen Walden and Burgess and Ranking Members Pallone and Green,

We are writing to express our support for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) program. The current funding for this important program is set to expire September 30, 2017, and we urge you to continue funding for this vital health care program.

The NHSC program provides loan repayment and scholarship opportunities for primary care, mental health, and dental health professionals in exchange for service in federally-designated Health Professional Shortage Areas. Because it is hard to naturally entice medical professionals to these locations, the market demand for medical services well exceeds the supply of health care providers in these areas.

Since 1972, the NHSC has placed more than 50,000 health care professionals, with more than 10,000 placed in the last year alone. These primary care professionals – including physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, mental and behavioral health professionals, physician assistants, certified nurse-midwives, and dental hygienists – deliver quality, culturally competent care to more than 11 million people in every state and territory.

The NHSC offers financial assistance to recruit and retain health care providers to meet the workforce needs of medically vulnerable communities through four key programs: The Loan Repayment Program, Scholarship Program, State Loan Repayment Program, and Students to Service Program.

Prior to FY2009, the NHSC was funded through the annual appropriations process. Today, the program is funded through FY2017 by a dedicated trust fund that was extended within the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015. With a strong history of results, and recognizing the key role access to primary care plays in controlling costs and improving health, we strongly support the extension of the NHSC trust fund. We appreciate the work of the Committee to date on the NHSC funding and look forward to working with you to ensure a sustainable future for this vital health care program.

Sincerely,