



UNITED STATES SENATE

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DURBIN, RUBIO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO REAUTHORIZE AND INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS PROGRAM

*Funding will address health workforce shortages in rural and urban areas;
recruit more health care providers*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) today introduced bipartisan legislation to provide historic investments in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) scholarship and loan repayment program to address health workforce shortages throughout our country. Today’s *Restoring America’s Health Care Workforce and Readiness Act* includes a three-year reauthorization that would double the mandatory funding, which will expire on September 30th, from \$310 million up to \$625 million in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), and increasing up to \$825 million in Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26). Durbin [secured](#) a historic \$1 billion in scholarship and loan repayment funding for NHSC and Nurse Corps in the *American Rescue Plan* to recruit more doctors, nurses, dentists, and behavioral health providers to underserved rural and urban areas.

“Our health care professionals put their all into caring for their patients, but the demands of the pandemic have exacerbated workforce shortages, especially in our underserved rural and urban communities,” said Durbin. **“Through scholarship and loan repayment, the National Health Service Corps is the premier program to build the pipeline of doctors, nurses, dentists, and behavioral health providers across America. I’m thankful for Senator Rubio’s partnership in increasing investments to help recruit the next generation of health care providers.”**

“If you’ve tried to go to the doctor lately, you’re well aware there is a nationwide shortage of physicians, nurses, and other health professionals. Increasing our investment in the National Health Services Corps will remedy that shortage by encouraging more people to pursue careers in the medical field and serve in areas of need,” said Rubio.

Nearly 100 million Americans live in communities with too few doctors, and half the country lives in a mental health care desert. It is estimated that the United States needs 450,000 nurses over the next two years, and is projected to face a shortage of 120,000 physicians over the next decade. One of the biggest barriers is the high cost of pursuing graduate education for health care providers, which can leave new doctors with an average debt of more than \$200,000.

The NHSC addresses these workforce shortages and health disparities by enticing promising students from diverse backgrounds into health careers in underserved communities by providing scholarship and loan repayment funding in exchange for a service commitment in an urban or rural area. Nationwide, more than 21 million patients were delivered care by NHSC providers. Across Illinois, more than 935 clinicians with NHSC serve in community health centers and hospitals.

Durbin and Rubio previously [introduced](#) the *Strengthening America's Health Care Readiness Act*, legislation that provides a historic investment in the NHSC, Nurse Corps, and National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) programs to bolster health emergency surge capacity and restore the pipeline of physicians, nurses, and other health professionals.

The *Restoring America's Health Care Workforce and Readiness Act* is endorsed by the: Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, National Association of Community Health Centers, American Medical Association, American Hospital Association, American Dental Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, PA Education Association, Council on Social Work Education, Illinois Health & Hospital Association.