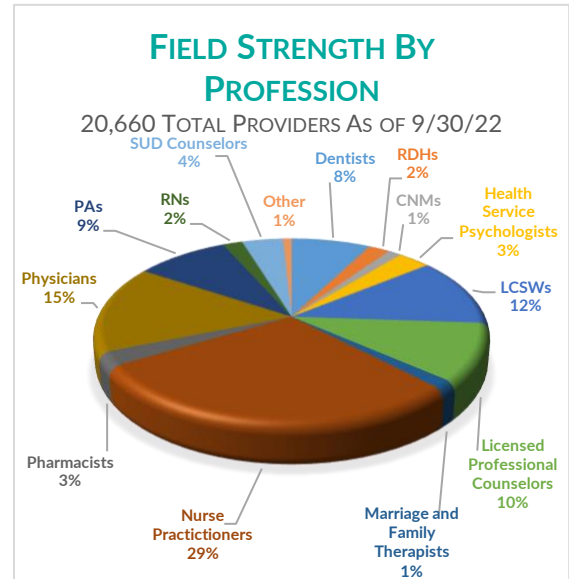


Background

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) program, established in 1972, is designed to incentivize primary care professionals—including physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, mental and behavioral health professionals, physician assistants, certified nurse-midwives, and dental hygienists—to work in underserved areas in rural and urban communities. In exchange for their service, the program helps to alleviate the burden of student debt through scholarship and loan repayment programs.

Since its founding, the NHSC has placed more than 69,500 providers in underserved communities, with over 20,000 members now providing care to more than 21 million patients. The NHSC has proven to be a successful, sustainable solution to the shortage of providers in thousands of communities across the U.S. More than 66% of

NHSC clinicians who complete their service continue to practice in a federally designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) up to one year later, and most continue to practice in HPSAs for over 10 years after completing their service. Nevertheless, the NHSC's current field strength is but a fraction of the nearly 37,000 practitioners necessary to fully meet the primary care, dental health, and mental health needs in all HPSAs—needs that have only become more acute due to attrition.



Current Funding

Today, the NHSC receives \$310 million in mandatory funding via a dedicated trust fund (which will expire at the end of FY2023) and \$125.6 million in annual discretionary appropriations. The urgent need to extend and bolster funding for the NHSC cannot be overstated as the nation continues to reel from severe clinician and healthcare workforce shortages, particularly in rural and underserved communities that can least afford further strain. HRSA currently estimates that more than 99 million Americans live in primary care health professional shortage areas (HPSAs), and more than 17,000 practitioners are needed to remove the HPSA designation from those areas. If mandatory and discretionary funding levels don't receive increases in FY24 and in the years to come, the NHSC's field strength will decrease and only a small portion of Loan Repayment and Scholarship applicants will be granted awards.

Legislative Request

We ask that Congress support legislation that ensures adequate and sustainable funding for the National Health Service Corps program and expands the program to address the urgent need for primary care in underserved communities across the country now and in the future.

Please Cosponsor:

- 1) S.2840, the *Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act*
- 2) H.R. 3080, the *Health Center Service Expansion and Provider Shortage Reduction Act*
- 3) H.R.1711/S. 940, the *Rural America Health Corps Act*