

Friends of the Health Resources and Services Administration
c/o American Public Health Association
www.friendsofhrsa.org

March XX, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Kingston
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Kingston and Ranking Members Moran and DeLauro:

The undersigned members of the Friends of HRSA urge you to restore funding for discretionary Health Resources and Services Administration programs to the FY 2010 level of \$7.48 billion in the FY 2015 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Friends of HRSA is a coalition of [170 national organizations](#) dedicated to improving health through supporting a well prepared workforce and the delivery of high-quality health services. The programs administered by HRSA serve the health needs of people who are medically underserved, low-income and geographically isolated in every state and U.S. territory.

We are deeply concerned that since FY 2010, HRSA's discretionary budget authority has been cut by 19 percent in nominal dollars and 25 percent when adjusted for inflation. Our nation's ability to deliver essential public health services and a capable public health workforce are essential for a healthy and thriving population that can translate into a productive workforce and reduced health care costs. While the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 and Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 provided modest and temporary relief from sequestration, austerity measures remain firmly in place.

The nation is facing a shortage of health professionals. As health coverage increases, and the nation experiences a growing, aging and more diverse population, alongside health professionals nearing retirement age, it is ever more critical to make investments that improve access and promote a high-performing workforce capable of meeting the increased and changing demands.

HRSA efficiently serves high-need rural and urban communities that experience persistent workforce shortages and lack access to care. HRSA has contributed to the decrease in infant mortality rate, a widely used indicator of the nation's health, which is now at an all-time low, and helped to reduce the gap that exists between racial groups. The agency carries out critical public health programs that reach millions of Americans, including: providing primary care services to more than 21 million people; providing training and support for health professionals; supporting maternal and child health programs that serve over 44 million vulnerable women and children; serving about half of the 1.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS and preventing new HIV infections; and ensuring access to family planning services to over 5 million poor and low-income women, men and adolescents.

Additionally, funding for multiple mandatory programs are slated to expire soon and account for nearly one-third of HRSA's total program level. The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program expires in September. The National Health Service Corps Fund and Community Health Center Fund are both set to expire at the end of FY 2015. In the absence of continued mandatory funding for these programs, the committee must address these shortfalls in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill to ensure HRSA's ability to keep people healthy and effectively treat illness or injury.

We urge you to consider HRSA's central role in strengthening the nation's health and restore HRSA's discretionary budget authority to the FY 2010 level of \$7.48 billion.

For any questions, please feel free to contact Nicole Burda, American Public Health Association, at Nicole.burda@apha.org or 202-777-2513.

Sincerely,

American Public Health Association

Cc: Senate Appropriations Committee
House Appropriations Committee