February 26, 2020

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

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

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

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

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Members Cole and Murray:

The undersigned 109 members of the Friends of HRSA coalition and other supporting organizations recommend providing $8.8 billion for discretionary Health Resources and Services Administration programs in the FY 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. We are grateful for the increases provided for HRSA programs in FY 2020, but HRSA’s discretionary budget authority is far too low to effectively address the nation’s current health care needs. Additional funding will allow HRSA to fill preventive and primary health care gaps and to build upon the achievements of HRSA’s more than 90 programs and more than 3,000 grantees. We strongly urge you to reject the $742 million in cuts proposed to HRSA’s discretionary budget in the president’s FY 2021 budget proposal for the agency.

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 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 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 over 11,000 community health centers which serve as the primary medical home to more than 28 million people, providing comprehensive, cost-effective care by reducing 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 health workforce and connecting skilled professionals to communities in need.
- HRSA’s Maternal and Child Health programs support patient-centered, evidence-based programs that optimize health, minimize disparities and improve 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 87% of clients achieving viral suppression, compared to just 59% of all people living with HIV nationwide.
- HRSA supports healthcare systems programs that increase access and availability of lifesaving bone marrow, cord blood and donor organs for transplantation. Additionally, the Healthcare Systems Bureau supports poison control centers, which contribute to significantly decreasing a patient’s length of stay in a hospital and save the federal government $662.8 million each year 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 reduces unintended pregnancy rates, limits transmission of sexually transmitted infections and increases early detection of breast and cervical cancer by ensuring access to family planning and related preventive health services to close to 4 million women, men and adolescents.
- HRSA also supports training, technical assistance and resource development to assist public health and health care professionals better serve individuals and communities impacted by intimate partner violence.

The nation faces a shortage of health professionals and a growing and aging population which will demand more health care. 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 a funding level of $8.8 billion for HRSA’s discretionary budget authority in FY 2021.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days
Allergy & Asthma Network
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association for Dental Research
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
The Gerontological Society of America
The Marfan Foundation
US Hereditary Angioedema Association
Vermont Public Health Institute

Cc: House Appropriations Committee
    Senate Appropriations Committee