Medically underserved areas and populations in California

America needs more physicians and nurses in the workforce. Title VII, the health professions training program, and Title VIII, the nursing workforce development program, help new doctors and nurses start their careers by reducing student debt. Proposals to cut these programs will discourage new students from entering certain medical fields and cause recent graduates to flee low-paying markets, leaving even more Americans without access to care.

University of California Health (UCH) asks for robust and sustained federal investments in Title VII and Title VIII funding.

Scaling back funding for these programs would have a detrimental impact on underserved communities that already are struggling with poor access to care.

Did you know that in California and all across the nation, there are places with such severe shortages of medical professionals that they are designated as Medically Underserved Areas or Medically Underserved Populations?

As the health workforce shortage in California and across the country intensifies, the importance of training the next generation of physicians and health care practitioners grows.

The funding received through Title VII and VIII programs helps UCH educate medical practitioners and provide them with cutting-edge research and training opportunities. These workforce training programs also enhance the health care infrastructure of our country, and work to preserve and increase the capacity to give high-quality, affordable care to UCH’s patients.

Sustained annual increases in Title VII and VIII funding are needed to address chronic shortages of doctors and nurses in MUAs and MUPs.

Without robust funding for Title VII and VIII, newly trained physicians and nurses will be discouraged from working in underserved areas where wages are lower.
Title VII also provides grants to medical schools for primary care education and training activities, including residency, internships and other accredited professional training programs in family medicine, general internal medicine and pediatrics. Grants are prioritized, in part, on the schools producing a high percentage of graduates that practice medicine in underserved communities.

Title VII also establishes a student loan repayment program for certain health professionals that demonstrate financial need and who agree to work in a MUA or with MUP for at least two years.

Programs under Title VII that reduce medical student debt in exchange for practicing in MUAs and with MUPs are important incentives to encourage new physicians to put down roots where they are needed most.

As one of the nation’s largest academic health systems, UCH makes significant investments in medical school and graduate medical education programs with an eye toward addressing persistent shortages in MUAs and among MUPs.

UCH’s six medical schools have 3,300 students enrolled in pursuit of medical degrees, and its hospitals have more than 5,687 M.D.s completing their residencies in preparation for being licensed to practice independently.

UCH medical residents carry a significant amount of debt, an average of $154,047, with the national average nearly 19 percent higher.
Under Title VIII, nurses working in designated shortage areas have access to two student loan repayment programs. Primary care nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives and psychiatric nurse specialists are eligible to apply to the National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, while registered nurses, including nurse practitioners, are eligible to apply to the NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program.

In addition to Title VIII funds and other federal student aid programs for graduate students, UCH’s nursing schools provide generous student aid through scholarships and grants at the campus, local and state level. These programs include traditional grant funding, as well as more innovative programs such as child care assistance and lower-cost housing.

UCH’s four nursing schools have nearly 1,500 nursing students enrolled and graduate approximately 460 new nurses annually.

About the University of California Health (UCH)

University of California Health is one of the nation’s largest academic health systems. It is comprised of six academic health centers, six medical schools, and 13 health professional schools.

Each year, it provides care to more than 375,000 people through its emergency departments, admits more than 172,000 people for inpatient care and provides more than 7.6 million outpatient visits.

To learn more, contact UC’s Office of Federal Governmental Relations at (202) 974-6300.