Support Full Funding of Title VII and VIII of the Health Resources and Services Administration

Current and growing workforce shortages remain a barrier to health care access for individuals in rural communities, children and families on low incomes, seniors, and veterans. Title VII and Title VIII of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) are the only federally funded programs seeking to improve the supply, distribution, and diversity of the health professions’ workforce, with a focus on primary care and interdisciplinary training. These programs help shape the workforce in targeted ways, such as promoting interprofessional, team-based care; promoting service in underserved areas; and filling other gaps in the health care workforce.

The full spectrum of Title VII and Title VIII programs are essential to prepare our next generation of medical professionals to adapt to the changing health care needs of the nation’s growing and aging population. Title VII and Title VIII programs are developed by assessing the needs of the communities they serve. Occupational therapy practitioners and training programs are eligible for funding under multiple Title VII programs such as Geriatric Education and Training, Allied Health Workforce Programs, and the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program.

AOTA urges funding of Titles VII and VIII of HRSA at the FY 2017 level of $580 million, the amount in the Senate FY 2018 appropriations bill.

Support Full Funding of the Behavioral Health Workforce Education Training Program

Occupational therapy is a skilled health, wellness, and rehabilitation service dedicated to maximizing performance and function. Occupational therapy practitioners are health care professionals whose education and expertise address the social, emotional, psychological, and physical aspects of interaction between and individual and their environments. Within mental health, occupational therapy utilizes this unique perspective to provide client-centered, occupation-based interventions that enable individuals with a mental illness to maximize their potential and lead productive, full lives.

The 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255) recognized the importance of the HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) Grant program by expanding and reauthorizing it. The BHWET program aims to reduce current behavioral health workforce shortages by supporting education and clinical training for behavioral health–related professionals and paraprofessionals. The 21st Century Cures Act also included occupational therapists in the BHWET program. Like many other behavioral health education programs, occupational therapy programs have difficulty providing fieldwork placements for students in behavioral health settings. Funding for the BHWET program is essential to helping grow the behavioral health workforce.

AOTA urges flat funding the Behavioral Health Workforce Education Training program at the FY 2017 level of $50 million, the amount in the Senate FY 2018 appropriations bill.