



## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: REDC Consortium

FROM: Center Road Solutions

DATE: February 11, 2022

**RE: Senate HELP Committee, Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety Hearing “Recruiting, Revitalizing & Diversifying: Examining the Health Care Workforce Shortage”**

On February 10, the U.S. Senate HELP Committee Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety held a hearing entitled [“Recruiting, Revitalizing & Diversifying: Examining the Health Care Workforce Shortage”](#). The hearing focused on the growing mental health epidemic in the nation’s youth, what steps Congress can take to address this issue and support those working in the mental health field to combat this crisis.

### **Member Issue Snapshots:**

Removing federal regulations: Braun (R-IN), Rosen (D-NV)

Workforce shortage: Baldwin (D-WI), Hickenlooper (D-CO)

Traveling nurses: Tuberville (R-AL)

Minority serving institutions: Cassidy (R-LA)

### **Opening Statements:**

#### **Chairwoman Patty Murray (D-WA)**

- All workers deserve paid leave, join a union and collective bargain to increase their wages, ensure their workplaces are adequately staffed and stocked. After all they have done for our communities, we need to support them.

#### **Subcommittee Chairman John Hickenlooper (D-CO)**

- We need to create a diverse health care workforce that looks like the communities they serve.
- We are headed for a workforce shortage of 130,000 physicians by 2030.
- We are facing a critical shortage in medical support staff and improve this pipeline of skilled workers.

#### **Subcommittee Ranking Member Mike Braun (R-IN)**

- Health care has focused on remediation, not prevention.
- Hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, insurers are going to have to take some of this burden and not rely on the federal government alone to fix this shortage issue.
- We spent \$178 billion within the provider relief fund, and we need to do more than just give out money. This solution will take more than money to fix.

### **Witnesses:**

#### **Margaret Flinter, PhD, APRN, Senior Vice President and Clinical Director, Community Health Center, Inc., and Chair, Board of Directors, National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Training Consortium ([testimony](#))**

- The National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Training Consortium was created to ensure quality and rigor in postgraduate NP training through formal accreditation.
  - It has earned recognition by the U.S. Department of Education as a federally recognized accrediting organization.
- The Consortium’s accredited programs plus a group of programs with whom CHC has formally collaborate can document 550 alumni.
  - With 25 programs nationally, we can assume 1,000 new NPs may now be able to choose a program.

#### **Reynold Verret, PhD, President, Xavier University of Louisiana ([testimony](#))**

- My institution is Catholic and considered a historically black college and university (HBCU).

- As of Fall 2021, the University has 245 full-time faculty members who offer courses in over 50 majors on the undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and first-professional degree levels.
- According to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), only 5% of all U.S. doctors are Black or African Americans.
  - A new UCLA study finds that the proportion of physicians who are Black in the U.S. has increased by only 4 percentage points over the past 120 years.

**Norma Quinones, LPN, Nursing Services Manager and National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement (NIMAA) Site Coordinator, Clinica Family Health ([testimony](#))**

- NIMAA is a nationally accredited, nonprofit post-secondary program formed in 2016 by two leading FQHCs.
  - NIMAA is a model for addressing primary care health workforce shortages, creating an accessible entry point for long-term health centers and diversity in the U.S. workforce.
  - It provides an affordable option that allows students to work part-time while completing the program and prepares graduates well for demanding primary care settings.
- Nationally, 90% of medical assistants are female, and the majority are Black, Indigenous, or People of color.
  - NIMAA's program allows us to help participants begin a health career that would otherwise be out of reach for them and earn a livable wage.

**Rachel Greszler, Research Fellow in Economics, Budget and Entitlements, Institute for Economic Freedom and Opportunity, The Heritage Foundation ([testimony](#))**

- Total employment today is between 4.1 million and 5.3 million below where it might have been without the pandemic.
- Workers are quitting their jobs at record high rates. In 2021, 47 million workers quite their jobs, requiring employers to replace 11 million more workers than they had in 2020, an d14 million more than the average between 2011 and 2020.
- Comprehensive data does not exist on how many health care workers have lost their jobs because of the vaccine mandate, but employment growth in health care between September 2021 and December 202 was more than 60% below total U.S. employment growth over the same period.
- Recommendations include abandon federal vaccine mandates, limit taxes, make welfare work better through work-oriented programs, allow provisional licensing for medical school graduate who not receive a residency position and more.

**Q&A**

**Senator Baldwin (D-WI):** We have an urgent nursing shortage in the state of Wisconsin but at the same time nursing students are being turned away because there is a shortage of nursing faculty. Could you speak to those issues Dr. Flinter and Dr. Verret?

**Dr. Flinter:** I think it is multifactorial. There is also a compression in clinical training sites. We need to recognize the nursing is a broad profession and have opportunities at all levels/roles.

**Dr. Verret:** The pipeline of students is another consideration for families that come from smaller means.

**Senator Tuberville (R-AL):** What do we currently know about the nursing staffing agencies that charge such high prices hospitals are forced pay?

**Ms. Greszler:** How can we effectively cut down on needless paperwork and regulations, so doctors and nurses don't have to spend as much time with patients that costs more money.

**Dr. Verret:** it speaks to the shortage of the nurses, and I don't know about the staffing agencies.

**Dr. Flinter:** the traveling nurses have been around for a long time. Where we have an issue is when we are losing valuable nurses that are full time. I do think the travel agencies play some role in [exploiting] this situation during this time.

**Senator Rosen (D-NV):** All 17 counties in Nevada are health professional shortage areas. We need to lower the barriers to completing the education they need. How can pausing student loan interest accruing during residency improve the health care professionals we need?

**Dr. Flinter:** Facing that mountain of debt as you enter into your residency is a daunting task. Your legislation is a very pragmatic, reasonable solution.

**Senator Cassidy (R-LA):** Can you talk about the challenges Xavier University faces when competing for federal research dollars?

**Dr. Verret:** The facilities are just as important as the faculty. The equipment or computer systems need to be available [and that is costly].