



# COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING THE PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK

*Leadership in Research, Career Advancement, and Education*

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## Testimony for Fiscal Year 2017

### Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Education Funded Programs

Submitted to the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related

Agencies; Committee on Appropriations; United States House of Representatives

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Submitted by

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On behalf of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), I am pleased to offer this written testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. CSWE is a nonprofit national association representing more than 2,500 individual members and more than 750 baccalaureate and master's programs of professional social work education. CSWE requests:

Agency	Account	Program	Funding Requested
HHS	HRSA	Title VII Health Professions Programs	\$280 Million
HHS	HRSA	Title VII Mental and Behavioral Health Education and Training Program	\$1 million for the Leadership in Public Health Social Work Education (LPHSWE) Program
HHS	HRSA	HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Grant Program	\$56 Million
HHS	SAMHSA	Minority Fellowship Program	\$11.7 million, including at least \$6.4 million for MFP core activities
ED	N/A	Pell Grant	\$5,935 for the maximum Pell Grant
ED	N/A	GAANN	\$31 million
ED	N/A	Loan Repayment Programs	Support without a cap on repayment
HHS	NIH	Overall Funding for NIH	\$34.5 billion

## **HRSA TITLE VII HEALTH PROFESSIONS PROGRAMS**

**CSWE urges the Committee to provide \$280 million in FY 2017 for the health professions education programs authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act and administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).** These health professions programs are designed to provide health-care providers with interdisciplinary training to meet the health-care needs of all Americans, including the underserved and those with special needs, and to expand minority representation in the health-care workforce. Social workers and social work students are eligible for Title VII programs, which provide loans, loan guarantees, and scholarships to students, and grants to institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations to build and maintain a robust health-care workforce.

**CSWE urges the Committee to provide \$1 million for the Leadership in Public Health Social Work Education (LPHSWE).** This funding supports the next generation of public health and social workers and ensures critical leadership, resources, and training.

### **HRSA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH WORKFORCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM (BHWET)**

The BHWET Program builds on HRSA's mental and behavioral health training efforts by providing grant funding for the mental health and substance abuse workforce serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder.<sup>1</sup> In 2015, the program's first year, social work programs were awarded about \$19,087,780 serving an estimated 4,196 students. **CSWE urges the Committee to support \$56 million for the BHWET Grant Program,** the level provided in the President's budget request. This is a \$6 million increase above the FY 2016 enacted level. CSWE

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/integrated-care-models/safety\\_net\\_providers](http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/integrated-care-models/safety_net_providers)

also encourages the Committee to include language specifying that accredited master's-level schools and programs of social work must be CSWE-accredited to receive funding. Similar criteria have been placed on mental and behavioral health grants at HRSA.

### **SAMHSA MINORITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

**CSWE urges the Committee to appropriate the highest level possible for the SAMHSA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) in FY 2017.** The goal of the MFP program is to increase the number of minority doctoral students preparing for leadership roles in mental health and substance use fields.<sup>2</sup> CSWE is one of six grantees of this critical program and administers funds to exceptional minority doctoral social work students. In addition, CSWE also administers funds for the Minority Fellowship Program-Youth (MFP-Y). This program reduces health disparities and improves behavioral health-care outcomes for racially and ethnically diverse populations by increasing the number of culturally competent master's-level behavioral health professionals serving children, adolescents, and populations in transition to adulthood.

Since its inception in 1974, the MFP has helped support doctoral-level professional education for over 1,000 ethnic minority social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, and family and marriage therapists. Still, the program struggles to keep up with the demands on these health professions. **The President's FY 2017 budget request includes \$11,669,000 to support six MFPs, two MFP-Y, two MFP-AC grants, and three technical assistance and evaluation support contracts. CSWE urges the Committee to support this request, including at least \$6.4 million for MFP core activities.**

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<sup>2</sup> According to SAMHSA, minorities make up over one-fourth of the population, but less than 20 percent of behavioral health providers come from ethnic minority communities. Retrieved from SAMHSA Minority Fellowship Program, <http://www.samhsa.gov/minorityfellowship/>.

## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ED): STUDENT AID PROGRAMS**

**CSWE supports full funding to bring the maximum individual Pell Grant to \$5,935 in FY 2017.** Pell Grants are one of the most important programs to increase access and affordability to ensure that all students, regardless of economic circumstances, can pursue higher education.

The Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program provides graduate traineeships in critical fields of study. Currently, social work is not defined as an area of national need; however, it was recognized by Congress as one in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. **We encourage ED to include social work in the GAANN program to enhance graduate education opportunities in social work, which will foster a sustainable health professions workforce. CSWE urges the Subcommittee to provide the FY 2012 pre-sequester funding level of \$31 million for the GAANN Program and include social work as an area of national need.**

CSWE supports ED's efforts to help students with high debt loads serve in low paying positions. Income-driven repayment and Public Service Loan Forgiveness programs enable social work graduates to serve in high-needs communities. **CSWE urges the Subcommittee to support loan repayment programs without a cap on loan forgiveness.**

## **NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH: SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH**

**CSWE supports at least \$34.5 billion for NIH in FY 2017** and advocates for continued investments in biomedical and health-related research that incorporates the social and behavioral science research necessary to better understand and address the needs of high-risk populations including children, and racial-, ethnic-minority, and geriatric populations.

Thank you for the opportunity to express these views. Please do not hesitate to call on the Council on Social Work Education should you have any questions or require additional information.