FY27 Programmatic Requests for Midwifery-Education Funding

Description of Requests

$5 million Set-Aside within the Title VII Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS) Program to fund midwife training. The SDS scholarships provide financial stability to low-income and non-traditional students and are an important resource to the influx of eligible students going into the health professions. This set-aside will fund accredited midwifery education programs that are not located within schools of nursing, to award student scholarships, with a focus on practitioners working in rural and maternity desert communities, to cover the total cost of tuition for the duration of the midwifery education program.

This program is a 5-year grant cycle, and there are 4 schools (CSU Fullerton, State University of New York, University of Washington, and Bastyr University) who are receiving funding to support students from economic and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. These schools are successfully expanding their student populations while aiming to increase the number of graduates working in maternity deserts and rural communities.

$8 million Set-Aside within the Title VIII Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) grants for Nurse Midwifery education. The ANEW grant program helps to educate and graduate primary care Advanced Practice Nurses who are prepared for the unique challenges of transitioning from nursing school to practice in rural and maternity desert communities, thereby increasing access to needed primary medical care for these populations. This set-aside will fund accredited nurse-midwifery programs to award student scholarships, with a focus on practitioners working in rural and maternity desert communities, to cover the total cost of tuition for the duration of the nurse-midwifery program. The program will also support the planning and development of new midwife training programs.

Eight midwifery programs were funded in the first cycle of this set-aside (University of Colorado, Fairfield University, University of Kansas Medical Center Research Institute, Frontier Nursing University, Regents of the University of Michigan, East Carolina University, University of New Mexico, Oregon Health & Science University, University of Tennessee and Vanderbilt University). These schools are able to award scholarships to midwifery students who are registered nurses, with a focus on practitioners working in rural and maternity desert communities, to cover the total cost of tuition for the duration of the midwifery program.

Funding Account

Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Agency (HRSA)

1. Health Professions Title VII
2. Nursing Workforce Title VIII

Justification for Request

Multiple studies have demonstrated improved outcomes from midwifery-led care when compared to outcomes with usual care (Rooks et al., Stapleton et al., Jolles, 2016, Jolles, 2022). Despite this compelling research supporting midwives as viable and cost-effective solutions to this nation's maternity care crises (poor outcomes, high costs and maternity provider shortages), midwives are underutilized in this country. Midwives currently attend approximately 12 percent of all births in the US, compared to countries like Great Britain, Sweden, Norway and France where midwives oversee more than half of all maternity care.

Funding to grow the midwifery workforce is a cost-effective solution to ensure better birth outcomes in the US. Federal dollars to expand existing education programs and develop new ones, provide essential student scholarship support, and build and sustain the preceptor workforce, will ensure a robust midwifery workforce sufficient and prepared to meet the urgent needs of the childbearing population in the US.

Funding Background

The Title VII SDS set-aside has been funded since FY20. It was originally funded at $2 million in FY20 and FY21. In FY22 it was funded at $3.5 million, and in the FY23 and 24 Omnibuses it received $5 million. This was maintained in the FY25 full year Continuing Resolution. The FY26 House and Senate Bills again funded this account at $5 million, and it was included in the FY26 Appropriations Omnibus. We are asking for level funding of this program in FY27 at $5 million.

The ANEW set-aside has been funded since FY23. The FY23 through FY25 President's budgets asked for $25 million for this set aside to address the maternal mortality crisis and the shortage of maternity care providers. The final FY23 and FY24 omnibuses funded the program at $8 million, and it was maintained in the FY25 full year Continuing Resolution. The FY26 House and Senate bills funded the set aside at $8 million, and it was funded in the FY26 Omnibus at $8 million. We are not asking for new money, just level funding of this carve out.

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