

March 8, 2013

Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Building, 131
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Dirksen Building, 131
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

I write to express my support for passage of an appropriation bill for the agencies within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2013 after the current continuing resolution expires on March 27, 2013. As you know, because continuing resolutions are temporary measures carrying over previous year funding without new start, transfer and reprogramming authority, they create significant uncertainty and disruption in federal agencies' ability to execute taxpayer dollars in the best interest of the nation.

Additionally, uncertainty associated with temporary continuing resolutions prevents strategic, long-term planning and budgeting. Passing annual appropriations bills are necessary to ensure Congress exercises its Constitutional responsibilities to appropriately allocate taxpayer funds and provide federal agencies with the ability to create smart, effective budgets extending into future fiscal years.

As you work on providing funding for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2013 for programs in your subcommittee jurisdiction, I respectfully request your support for the programs listed below. The funding requested for the national programs is to be spent at the agencies' discretion within the existing budget line and is not intended for any specific business, state, community or other entity.

1. Title: Alaska Native Educational Equity

Program Description: Provides grants to meet the unique education needs of Alaska Natives and to support supplemental education programs to benefit Alaska Natives.

Rationale: These funds address the severe educational handicaps of Alaska Native schoolchildren. Funds are used for the development of supplemental educational programs to benefit Alaska Natives. Supporting Alaska Native educational equity also

honors the federal government's responsibility to Native students who live in a state that receives no funding from the Bureau of Indian Education.

Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget Request: \$33.185 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support President's Budget Request

Budget Account: Education Improvement Programs

Recipient: Department of Education

2. Title: Community Health Centers

Program Description: Provides funding for community health centers, migrant health centers, healthcare for the homeless, and public housing health service grants. These programs are part of the ongoing effort to increase the number of people who have access to medical services at health centers, which the Committee has been supportive of in the past.

Rationale: The report for S. 3295, the *Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2013*, states the Committee's belief that the Congressional intent of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (PPACA) funding for community health centers was to enable individuals possessing affordable health insurance for the first time in 2014 to have as many entry points to the healthcare system as possible. Funding for the programs grouped under Community Health Centers will promote access to medical services at health centers.

Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget Request: \$1.562 billion in discretionary funding, plus \$1.5 billion in mandatory funding made available through the PPACA for FY13

Fiscal Year 2013 Senate Appropriations Bill Amount: \$1.567 billion in discretionary funding, plus \$1.5 billion in mandatory funding made available through the PPACA for FY13

Additional Amount Requested: Support the Senate FY13 Appropriations Amount

Budget Account: Community Health Centers

Recipient: Department of Health and Human Services

3. Title: Rural Healthcare Services Outreach Grants

Program Description: Supports projects that demonstrate new and innovative models of outreach in rural areas, such as integration and coordination of health services. This includes the Frontier Extended Stay Clinic Demonstration (FESC), which is currently authorized through the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). FESC is a Medicare payment classification pertaining to (1) emergency treatment of patients staying in the clinic for over four hours when transporting them to a hospital is not possible, and (2) short-term (up to 48 hours) monitoring and observation of patients in cases where an EMS transfer or a hospital emergency room visit or stay is unnecessary. A FESC may only be located in a community that is at least 75 miles from the nearest acute care or critical access hospital, or that is inaccessible by public road.

Chairman Harkin & Ranking Member Moran

March 8, 2013

Page 3

Rationale: In response to the growing need for emergency care in rural America, specifically in frontier areas, Congress authorized the FESC Demonstration project through HRSA and CMS. FESC allows remote clinics to treat patients for more extended periods, including overnight stays, and prevents the need for many costly medical evacuation operations to distant hospitals. Extending the FESC Demonstration project will help improve access to care for rural Americans.

Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget Request: \$55.553 million

Fiscal Year 2013 Senate Appropriations Bill Amount: \$57.553 million

Additional Amount Requested: Support the Senate FY13 Appropriations Amount

Budget Account: Rural Health

Recipient: Department of Health and Human Services

Bill Language Requested: Section 434(e) of Public Law No. 108-173 is amended by replacing the word "three" with the word "five" and replacing the number "3" with the number "5"

Report language Requested: The Committee understands that many primary care clinics in isolated, remote locations are providing extended stay services and are not staffed or receiving appropriate compensation to provide this service. The Committee encourages HRSA to continue its support of "Frontier Extended Stay Clinic" providers who provide expanded services in remote and isolated primary care clinics to meet the needs of seriously ill or injured patients who cannot be transferred quickly to acute care referral centers, and to meet the needs of patients who require monitoring and observation for a limited time.

Thank your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Lindsay Kavanaugh, at (202) 224-3004 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator