Federal Health Care Workforce Education and Training Programs

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Table of Contents

• Overview of GAO
• Federal funding for health care workforce programs
• Federal health care workforce programs
• Ongoing GAO work on federal health care workforce education and training programs
• Prior GAO reports on federal health care workforce education and training
Overview of GAO

• The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) is an independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress. Often called the "congressional watchdog," GAO investigates how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars.

• GAO’s mission is to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people. GAO provides Congress with timely information that is objective, fact-based, nonpartisan, nonideological, fair, and balanced.
Federal Funding for Health Care Workforce Programs

- Federal programs provide postsecondary training or education for direct care health professionals (such as dentists, medical assistants, nurses, occupational therapists, optometrists, pharmacists, physical therapists, physicians, physician assistants, podiatrists, psychologists, and social workers) or support the costs of such training by directly providing or funding one or more of the following services
  - instruction (e.g., degree programs) or formal training opportunities (e.g., internships) for health professional students;
  - on-the-job clinical training for postgraduate health professionals (e.g., residencies);
  - financial assistance for health professional students or professionals (e.g., stipends, scholarships, loans, or repayment or cancellation of educational loans);
  - or
  - patient care-related continuing education for direct care health professionals if such training was the main program service provided

Federal Funding for Health Care Workforce Programs

• In fiscal year (FY) 2012, four federal departments administered 91 programs that supported postsecondary training or education specifically for direct care health professionals.
  ▫ Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
  ▫ Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
  ▫ Department of Defense (DOD)
  ▫ Department of Education (Education)
Federal Funding for Health Care Workforce Programs, in FY 2012

Figure: Proportion of Total Reported Federal Funding Obligated for Health Care Workforce Training by Graduate Medical Education (GME) and Other Programs, Fiscal Year 2012

Source: GAO-13-709R
CMS Graduate Medical Education (GME) Programs

• In FY 2012, HHS reported obligating $11.7 billion for 69 programs that support education or training for the health care workforce.

• The majority of this funding went to two programs administered by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) that provided graduate medical education (GME) payments to teaching hospitals and other entities that train physician residents.

• VA and DOD also fund GME programs of their own costing about $660 million
HHS Workforce Programs

We grouped existing HHS programs into the following five categories:

- Training Physicians
- Training Non-physician Professionals
- Addressing Geographic Shortages
- Promoting Workforce Diversity
- Other

Note: Some programs fall into more than one of the categories above. These programs were assigned to the category that most closely matched the purpose and description provided by the federal agency responsible for the program. (For more details, visit http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-709R.)
Training Physicians

Includes 18 total programs, that address the following:

- Health Center Residencies
- Children's Hospitals GME
- Promoting primary care
Training Physicians

• Children’s Hospital GME Payment Program - $256.2 Million
  ▫ Payments to freestanding children’s hospitals that sponsor residency programs

• Primary Care Training and Enhancement - $38.9 Million
  ▫ Grants to improve quality, quantity, distribution, and diversity of primary care workforce
    • Academic Administrative Units in Primary Care
    • Physician Faculty Development in Primary Care
    • Predoctoral Training in Primary Care
    • Residency Training in Primary Care

• The Combating Autism Act Training Program - $30.2 Million
  ▫ Grants to public and private nonprofit institutions of higher learning to provide training to health professionals in skills related to autism and other developmental disabilities

• Teaching Health Centers GME Payment Program - $17.2 Million
  ▫ Payments to qualified teaching health centers – community-based institutions that sponsor residency programs
Training Non-physician Professionals

Includes 27 total programs that address the following:

- Nursing
- Physician Assistant/Other
- Dentists
Training Non-physician Professionals

- Health Profession Opportunity Grants - $80 Million
  - Grants to entities for the purpose of providing education and training to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients

- Medicare Payments for Nursing and Allied Health Education - $273 Million
  - Medicare payments outside of GME payments to hospitals that operate approved nursing and allied health education programs

- Advanced Nursing Education Grants - $63.4 Million
  - Grants to accredited nurse education programs
    - Advanced Nursing Education
    - Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship

- Training in General, Pediatric, and Public Health Dentistry - $20.6 Million
  - Grants to dental or dental hygiene schools or approved residency programs in the practice of general, pediatric, or public health dentistry
Addressing Geographic Shortages

Includes 9 total programs that addressed the following:

- Programs serving Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas
- National Health Service Corps
  - Retention programs
  - Programs targeted to areas with greatest shortages
- Other rural programs
Addressing Geographic Shortages

- **NHSC Loan Repayment Program - $220.7 Million**
  - Loan repayment of up to $60,000 to primary care medical, dental, and behavioral health providers in exchange for 2 years of full-time service of 4 years of half-time service in an HPSA

- **NHSC Scholarship Program - $53 Million**
  - Scholarships to students pursuing careers in primary care who are required to dedicate 2 to 4 years of service in an HPSA

- **Area Health Education Centers - $27.2 Million**
  - Grants to medical and nursing schools to develop and maintain area health education centers (AHEC) and programs that improve the distribution, diversity and supply of the primary care health workforce

- **IHS Loan Repayment Program - $30 Million**
  - Repayment of qualified education loans for health care professionals in exchange for a commitment to serve in an IHS, tribal, or urban Indian health care facility
Promoting Workforce Diversity

Includes 11 total programs.

- **Centers of Excellence - $22.9 Million**
  - Grants to certain health professions schools to support education and training enhancement programs that increase health professions opportunities for underrepresented minority students and faculty

- **Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students - $47.5 Million**
  - Grants to health professions schools to provide scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds

- **IHS Health Professions Scholarship Program for Indians - $11.9 Million**
  - Scholarships to American Indians and Alaska Natives enrolled in health professions training programs

- **Minority Fellowship Program - $5.6 Million**
  - Grants to professional associations to provide training and financial support to minority doctoral and post-doctoral students who are studying in a mental or behavioral health profession
Other programs

- Health Professions Student Loans
- Geriatric Education Centers
- AIDS Education and Training Centers
- Community-Based Dental Partnership Programs
Health Care Workforce Training Programs by VA, DOD, and Education

• VA: 12 programs
  ▫ Cost: $1.7 Billion (FY 2012)

• DOD: 7 programs
  ▫ Cost: $0.9 Billion (FY 2012)

• Education: 3 programs
  ▫ Cost: $2 million (FY 2012)

Source: GAO-13-709R
Ongoing GAO Work on Federal Health Care Workforce Education and Training Programs

- Research Objectives
  - What are HHS’s strategic planning and other efforts for ensuring that the nation’s health care workforce can meet future demands?
  - What information and processes does HHS use to monitor its health care workforce efforts?
  - To what extent are HHS’s individual educational and training programs contributing toward its health care workforce goals?
Prior GAO Reports on Federal Health Care Workforce Education and Training

Conclusion

• Question and answer session

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