

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 21, 2014

The Honorable Thomas Perez  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Perez:

The potential shortage of health care providers in coming years is significant and stands to impact the delivery of timely and quality care for America's patients. As these challenges increase, we must ensure that federal health care workforce programs are producing the maximum return on taxpayer investment. All federally financed health care training programs should be closely scrutinized to determine whether they are operating efficiently, aligning with specific national needs, and achieving their strategic objectives. Preparing a health system that can both meet today's demands and responding to changing dynamics in the future will not happen without rigorous and consistent oversight.

Many Department of Labor (DOL) programs, such as efforts under the Workforce Investment Act, have latitude in choosing which industries to target. For example, in September 2013, DOL announced a new round of grants to community colleges and universities for training programs that can focus on industries such as advanced manufacturing, transportation, and health care. Though DOL is not the chief agency establishing federal health care policy, its programs can still have an impact on patients. Yet, with an eye on oversight, we know that every federal dollar spent on a misaligned program or lost due to mismanagement does not achieve the goal of training the next generation of health care professionals.

We respectfully request that you assist us in our review and oversight of federal health care workforce programs by providing the following information:

1. Please provide a comprehensive list of each program at DOL that funds training or education in health care fields, and include all statutory and/or departmental strategic plans and goals for each such program.
2. Please provide a comprehensive list of all metrics used to monitor the progress, outcomes, and recipients of each such program, including metrics to assess whether programs are achieving their statutory objectives.
3. Please provide the funding levels for and number of professionals supported or served by each such program each year for the last five years.

4. Please describe how programs determine whether to fund or approve grants for health care training or education over other fields. Please include a description of metrics used to make such determinations.
5. Once a program has determined to fund or approve grants for health care education or training, please describe the data and methodology used to target specific health care fields and/or geographic regions.
6. Please describe the department's procedure for coordinating programs intra-departmentally and with other federal agencies to ensure health care workforce programs are addressing unmet needs and avoiding unnecessary duplication.

We look forward to working with you to improve the efficiency and accountability of health care workforce training programs to ensure a sound investment aligned with both the needs of the DOL and our nation. Thank you in advance for providing a written response within 30 days.

Sincerely,



Tom A. Coburn, M.D.  
U.S. Senator



Michael B. Enzi  
U.S. Senator



Richard Burr  
U.S. Senator