

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2026

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As you develop the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year 2027, we urge you to provide increased funding for two important substance use disorder (SUD) workforce programs at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA): **the Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program (STAR-LRP) and the Addiction Medicine Fellowship (AMF) Program.** Thanks to your leadership, Congress took critical steps toward addressing our country's SUD workforce shortage by funding the STAR-LRP at \$40 million, and the AMF Program at \$25 million, in Fiscal Year 2026. But there is much more to do in our nation's battle against SUD – including ensuring comprehensive and affordable training for our physicians, nurses, behavioral health professionals, and other health care workers.

As we look to the upcoming fiscal year, it is critical that Congress continue to build on these efforts. According to the latest Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Survey of Drug Use and Health, in 2024, nearly 49 million people aged 12 or older had a SUD in the past year; however, only 10.2 million people aged 12 or older received any form of SUD treatment in the past year. Further, SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Workforce Report describes the tremendous gap between the number of behavioral health professionals that are currently available to treat SUD and what is needed to help millions of Americans suffering from SUD. In recognition of the impact of the SUD crisis on American families, Congress must expand support for the health care professionals who treat SUD and serve on the frontlines.

First, the STAR-LRP helps individuals who pursue full-time substance use disorder treatment jobs in high-need geographic areas repay their student loans. Demand for this program has been overwhelming. More than 1,900 eligible applicants applied to the program during the FY 2023 STAR LRP cycle, but only 295 awards were ultimately made. **Therefore, we urge you to provide \$50 million for the STAR-LRP in Fiscal Year 2027, an increase of \$10 million. Congress funds the STAR-LRP as a set-aside within HRSA's "Health Workforce," as**

reflected in the 2026 Joint Explanatory Statement for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.

Second, the AMF Program awards grants to certain institutions to expand the number of fellows trained as addiction medicine physicians and addiction psychiatrists who work in underserved, community-based settings that integrate primary care with mental health disorder and substance use disorder prevention and treatment services. As of February 2026, there were only 110 ACGME-accredited addiction medicine fellowship programs in the nation – below the recommended goal of 125 fellowships by 2022 set by President Trump’s Commission on Combating Drug Abuse and the Opioid Epidemic in 2017. **Therefore, we urge you to provide \$30 million for the AMF Program in FY2027, an increase of \$5 million. Congress funds the AMF Program as a set-aside within HRSA’s Mental and Substance Use Disorder Workforce Training Demonstration program, which is within the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training program, as reflected in House Report 119-271 and Senate Report 119-55. Both reports were incorporated by reference in the 2026 Joint Explanatory Statement for Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.**

We recognize the difficult task you face in balancing the many needs of our nation in the Fiscal Year 2027 Labor-HHS appropriations bill, and we appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



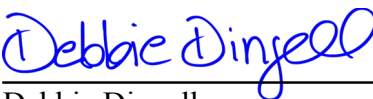
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Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
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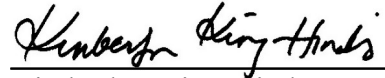
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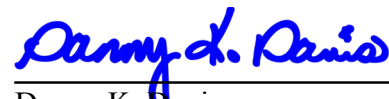
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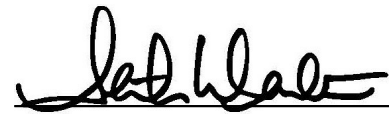
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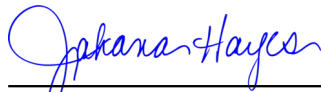
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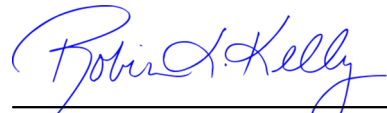
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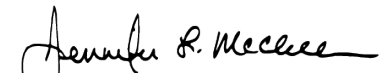
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Member of Congress



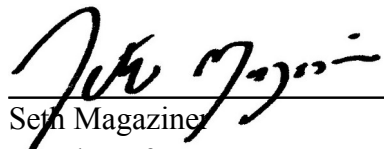
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Ayanna Pressley
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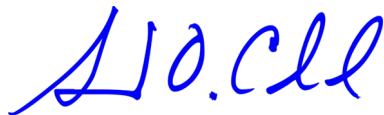
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Chellie Pingree
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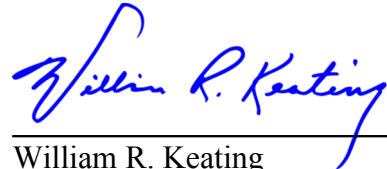
Paul D. Tonko
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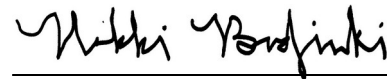
Angie Craig
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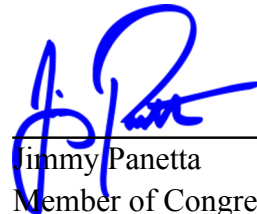
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