August 5, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN COVID-19 SUPPLEMENTAL

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

The undersigned organizations, as part of the Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP), write to strongly urge you to include student loan forgiveness for health professionals in the upcoming COVID-19 supplemental package. Before the pandemic, our nation already faced a shortage of health care professionals; now, more than ever, a robust workforce is critical to meet our country's growing health care needs.

FASHP was created in 1968 as a forum for representatives of health professions education institutions to address education's role in organizational patterns of health care; to encourage effective collaboration among the professions in education and practice; to prepare health professions education for the future; and to serve as a liaison with other organizations sharing an interest in health professions education. FASHP is comprised of 18 associations representing a health professions education community that includes 7,429 programs, institutions, hospitals, and health systems, and more than 1.3 million students, residents, faculty, clinicians, administrators, and researchers.

With COVID-19 cases still on the rise, health professionals are risking their lives daily for the health of communities across the nation. Some have graduated early to enter the workforce. Others have traveled across the country to practice in COVID-19 hotspots. Health researchers and scientists are leading the charge to discover, test, and approve viable treatments and vaccines to combat COVID-19 and prevent future outbreaks. Off the front lines of the pandemic, providers remain critical to the full health of their patients, especially as we work to reopen the country.

Helping maintain our country's health workforce by reducing their outstanding education debt during COVID-19 is certainly in the nation's interest. Many health professions students take on significant education debt, which can be a financial burden after graduation, during training, or in medical residency. Despite the cost, many pursue a career serving vulnerable patients in underserved public service facilities, such as federally qualified health centers, rural hospitals, or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Several Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle have already separately introduced commendable health professions loan forgiveness bills in response to COVID-19 and before the pandemic. We applaud those efforts and encourage you to work with your colleagues to find a common ground proposal to include in the next COVID-19 supplemental package.

Sincerely,

American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
American Dental Education Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Chiropractic Colleges
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of University Programs in Health Administration
Council on Social Work Education
Physician Assistant Education Association