



## **The Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP)**

### **Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program and the Future Health Care Workforce**

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program, created and authorized under the *College Cost Reduction and Access Act* and signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2007, provides loan forgiveness to those who commit to a career in public service, forging a pathway for graduates who wish to serve the public in much-needed capacities.

***FASHP strongly urges Congress to preserve PSLF and ensure diligent oversight of this critical program, safeguarding access to patient care in areas of national need and rejects proposals to eliminate it.*** FASHP recognizes the true value to our health care system that PSLF provides and stands united in strong support of this important program.

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Choosing to pursue a career in public service often means forgoing potentially higher earnings to serve the underserved and vulnerable populations. Programs such as PSLF are vital to retain and recruit a health professions workforce that will be able to collectively meet the growing health care needs and challenges of our nation.

Health professions students graduate with relatively high debt compared to other graduate students, which could deter individuals from pursuing careers in public service. Unlike other career paths, the high debt burden of health professions education is frequently compounded by years of post-graduate training, which is required for these professionals to be licensed/certified by a state to practice independently or to gain the post-doctoral training and experience to serve this population. As a result, student total loan repayment amounts often exceeds two to three times the amount borrowed due to the accumulated interest/high interest rates, in addition to other unavoidable costs related to pursuing a health professions education. Therefore, federal loan repayment and forgiveness programs, such as PSLF, provide a crucial pathway for future health professionals who desire to help address the widening public health care gaps, particularly in underserved communities across the nation.

#### **About FASHP**

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 liaison with other organizations sharing an interest in health professions education. FASHP is comprised of 16 associations representing a health professions education community that

includes 4,786 programs, institutions, hospitals, and health systems, and more than 1.4 million students, faculty, clinicians, administrators, residents, and researchers.

In particular, FASHP advocates appropriate support for Federal programs under the Public Health Service Act's Titles VII (health professions) and VIII (nursing workforce) and loan and scholarship programs for health professions programs in that Act that educate health professionals, and motivate service in underserved communities. These programs are not a major Federal expenditure, but they provide critical support for improvements in health professions training for a more patient-centered, team-based health care system and increased access to primary care. The member organizations of FASHP stand ready to be a resource and to work individually and collectively with Federal and State leaders, policymakers and others on health professions education policy.

#### FASHP Member Organizations

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  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Chiropractic Colleges  
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of University Programs in Health Administration  
Physician Assistant Education Association  
Council on Social Work Education

#### *Liaison Members:*

American Psychological Association  
American Physical Therapy Association