UNMC’s Title VII Programs

UNMC relies on Title VII funding from the Public Health Service Act to support educational programs that train health professionals in fields experiencing shortages, and to provide quality, affordable, and cost-effective care in areas of Nebraska that are most in need of health care services, particularly rural and urban underserved communities. Cuts in Title VII funding from $300 million in FY 05 to $151 million in FY 06 have significantly reduced or eliminated many Title VII programs that are important to Nebraska. It is essential that Congress restore Title VII funding to the FY 05 levels to ensure these important programs will be able to continue serving the citizens of Nebraska.

Munroe Meyer Institute (MMI) Department of Psychology

MMI Psychology Behavioral Health Specialists provide clinical services and training for a variety of infant, child, and adolescent behavioral, social-emotional, physical, medical, and cognitive disabilities. Services are provided within MMI, in hospitals, schools, and in community-based clinics throughout Nebraska. MMI has used Title VII funding to address Nebraska’s mental and behavioral health professional shortages. In 2005, the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration classified 88 of Nebraska’s 93 counties as Health Profession Shortage Areas in mental/behavioral health. Title VII funding has helped place mental and behavioral health professionals in these shortage areas. As a result, 5,000 annual behavioral health patient visits are provided to families in over 140 Nebraska cities and towns. Any further reductions in Title VII funding will place MMI’s rural programs in a severe financial crisis, which would further reduce Nebraska’s already severely limited mental health services to its rural citizens.

UNMC’s School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP)

The School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP) has positively impacted several rural and tribal communities as a result of programs and grants funded by Title VII. Title VII funding has enabled the creation of several courses for the SAHP’s highly successful distance education program, which has provided opportunities for students in rural areas to complete their degrees without leaving their communities. Through the Quentin Burdick program, which was eliminated in FY 06, Several Title VII-funded grants have delivered cost-effective, comprehensive health care in rural diabetic clinics in Native American communities, and have enabled UNMC health professionals and students to develop diabetes prevention and management training courses for implementation in tribal communities.

Nebraska Geriatric Education Center (NEBGEC)

The Nebraska Geriatric Education Center improves health care of Nebraska’s elderly population residing in rural areas and nursing homes through enhanced training of health professionals and faculty in geriatrics and gerontology. NEBGEC helps eliminate barriers to care and health care disparities through training of health care professionals engaged in caring for these underserved elders. Title VII funding for geriatric programs was completely eliminated in FY 06. There are 80 health care providers throughout the state who rely on Title VII funding to obtain education in caring for Nebraska’s most vulnerable elderly persons, especially those with mental health problems and those in nursing homes. It is essential that Title VII geriatric funding is reinstated, so these important programs can continue.

Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)

AHECs are created through grant funds from the federal government as a cooperative effort for medical schools and community centers to recruit and train health care professionals to serve in rural and other underserved areas. In addition to the AHEC program office at UNMC, there are AHECs in Grand Island, Norfolk, Scottsbluff, Beatrice and Omaha. Together, they serve every county in Nebraska. Nebraska AHECs have been successful at encouraging thousands of students to choose health careers and to practice in rural and underserved areas through programs such as: leadership conferences, career and health fairs, science meets, teacher workshops, after-school enrichment programs, and health career presentations.

Other Important Facts about Title VII Programs:

- Title VII programs are the only federal investment in interdisciplinary training, which is vitally important as care is often provided in interdisciplinary settings.
- Title VII programs leverage significant state and private resources by using federal seed money to start up programs. Some eventually become independent of federal aid, such as AHECs.
- Further reductions or eliminations in Title VII funding will exacerbate the already troubling health professional shortages by immediately impacting the recruitment and training of health professional students.