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May 22, 2023

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*Executive Director*  
Robert I. L. Morrison

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
711 Hart Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
284 Russell Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Senator Durbin and Senator Rubio:

On behalf of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD), thank you for introducing S.862, the Restoring America's Health Care Workforce and Readiness Act. NASADAD supports this initiative to help address our nation's workforce crisis.

NASADAD is the national association representing State alcohol and drug agencies from the fifty States, the District of Columbia, and Territories. The role of these agencies, also known as Single State Authorities (SSAs), is to ensure public dollars are dedicated to effective substance use disorder (SUD) services across the continuum of prevention, treatment, and recovery.

State alcohol and drug agencies across the country are observing distinct shortages in our nation's substance use disorder workforce. In fact, the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) 2022 Behavioral Health Workforce Projections Report confirms this challenge, noting the demand for substance use disorder counselors is "...expected to increase 10 percent by 2035, with demand exceeding supply and leading to a deficit of addiction counselors of approximately 920 Full-Time Equivalents."<sup>1</sup> In addition, the report estimated that "...by 2035, the supply of psychiatrists is expected to decrease by approximately 8 percent."<sup>2</sup> Further, the COVID-19 pandemic amplified the national SUD crisis due to a lack of SUD professionals to meet the increasing demand for alcohol and other drug services.

As you well know, an important federal program designed to help address this important challenge is HRSA's National Health Service Corps (NHSC). The NHSC is designed "...to increase access to care in underserved areas by supporting qualified health care providers dedicated to working in underserved communities in urban, rural, and tribal areas."<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the NHSC aims to eliminate health workforce shortages in federally-designated health professional shortage areas (HPSA), including SUD services providers, such as SUD counselors.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2024.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2024.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2024.pdf>

The Restoring America's Health Care Workforce and Readiness Act (S. 862) seeks to increase HRSA's capacity to help address the nation's SUD professional workforce shortage by reauthorizing and increasing the mandatory portion of the NHSC. In particular, S. 862 would provide \$625 million in FY 2024; \$675 million in FY 2025; and \$825 million in FY 2026. This increased funding would enable the NHSC to expand the number of supported providers in HPSAs, including SUD providers. An important component of this effort stems from NHSC Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Program (SUD LRP). For FY 2022, the NHSC as a whole developed a total reported field strength of 713 SUD counselors, with 607 coming from the SUD LRP. The increased funding level proposed in your bill would help the NHSC train even more of these critical SUD providers.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, S. 862 proposes to establish a National Health Service Corps Emergency Service demonstration project by expanding the eligibility of those able to participate in the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). Currently, the NDMS activates medical, public health and other personnel from private practices and deploys them to disaster locations as temporary federal employees. Your proposed demonstration project would enable NHSC participants to engage in service through the NDMS. We support this pilot program and hope that substance use disorder professionals would be an important part of this initiative.

Thank you again for introducing S.862, the Restoring America's Health Care Workforce and Readiness Act. NASADAD supports this legislation. We look forward to working with you on issues pertaining to addressing the national health workforce shortage, in particular for substance use disorder professionals.

Should you have any questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me (202-292-4862; [rmorrison@nasadad.org](mailto:rmorrison@nasadad.org)).

Sincerely,



Robert I. L. Morrison,  
Executive Director  
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)

Cc:

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<sup>4</sup> <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/field-strength>