



October 25, 2021

The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
Chair, Energy and Commerce Committee  
Subcommittee on Health  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce  
Committee Subcommittee on Health  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Eshoo and Ranking Member Guthrie:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), I write to express our support for H.R. 3320, the Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act of 2021.

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 218,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology support personnel; and students.

The Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act authorizes grants to accredited audiology, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and respiratory therapy training programs to increase the participation and retention of diverse students in these programs and ensure a pipeline of professionals to address workforce shortages in these areas. This is crucial because a workforce that reflects the diversity of the population it serves will increase patient choice, enhance satisfaction, and most importantly, improve patient outcomes. Studies have demonstrated that patients who receive care from members of their own racial and ethnic background generally have better outcomes, and health professionals from underrepresented and minority backgrounds are more likely to practice in medically underserved areas. Members of minority groups also disproportionately reside in areas with provider shortages.

During the 116th Congress, Representative Rush and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers introduced similar legislation, which the Committee included in the EMPOWER for Health Act of 2019 (H.R. 2781), that passed the House by voice vote on October 28, 2019, but that did not advance in the Senate. ASHA is grateful to Representatives Rush and Mullin for reintroducing this legislation, and we urge its approval by the Committee and consideration by the House.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Eric Masten, ASHA's director of federal affairs for education, at [emasten@asha.org](mailto:emasten@asha.org).

Sincerely,

A. Lynn Williams, PhD, CCC-SLP  
2021 ASHA President