

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 22, 2019

Dr. Nina Tumosa, Project Officer
Bureau of Health Workforce
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Tumosa:

We write in support of the application submitted by the University of New England's (UNE) College of Osteopathic Medicine to the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP). Submitted in collaboration with the University of Maine (UMaine), UNE's proposal, the "Aging Maine Transformation Collaborative" (AgingME), aims to improve the health and well-being of Maine's older adults through enhanced practitioner training and the formation of a statewide council.

Maine has the highest median age of any state in the nation, which presents unique challenges to the state's health workforce for meeting the needs of its aging population. In addition, many of Maine's elderly residents reside in rural areas where there is often a lack of access to primary care. As a result, HRSA has designated areas in Maine as Medically Underserved Areas and Health Professions Shortage Areas with regard to primary care. It is worth noting that even those areas with accessible primary care often have inadequate or no training in geriatrics. UNE and UMaine both have geriatric-specific health professions education and training expertise and each participates in statewide health care improvement efforts focused on aging, making them highly qualified to lead this initiative.

Through their proposal, UNE and UMaine would be able to integrate geriatrics with primary care through the delivery of geriatrics training to physician assistants and nurse practitioners working in rural areas, as well as community-based efforts to maximize patient and family engagement. In addition to training, this GWEP would convene a statewide AgingME Council through which clinical, academic, and community-based organizations serving Maine's older adults can better communicate, disseminate their work, and align their efforts around geriatrics principles. This alignment includes primary care practices and community partners that serve older Mainers, their families, and caregivers. We believe UNE and UMaine are well-equipped to lead efforts in our state to meet the need for a geriatric-capable workforce to improve the health outcomes for older adults in Maine and across rural America.

Thank you for your time and effort in reviewing this proposal. We urge your careful consideration of this application, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] when a final decision is made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator