**Program:** Health Professions

**Agency:** Department of Health and Human Services  
**Bureau:** Health Resources and Services Administration

---

**Program Summary:**

The Health Professions program provides grants to academic institutions to help meet the costs of training and educating students as nurses, doctors, dentists and other health professionals and provides additional support to minority and low income students and faculty.

The assessment found:
1. There is disagreement regarding the purpose of the program and a clear and focused purpose is not found in the authorizing legislation, external views and program documents. For example, the agency believes the purpose is to address the failure of the market to distribute health providers to all areas of the country and to serve all population groups. Others believe the purpose is primarily to help rural areas or to subsidize schools.
2. While the program is managed well overall, it has not regularly used performance data to improve program outcomes. The General Accounting Office noted in 1997 that effectiveness has not been shown and the impact will be difficult to measure without common goals, outcome measures, and reporting. The program has adopted new performance benchmarks, but lacks data to demonstrate progress.
3. Outcome data on some program activities are available and indicate the impact of the program may be limited. One study found only 1.5% of physicians trained by institutions receiving a family medicine training grant between 1978 and 1993 provide health care in areas with a shortage of physicians, compared to 1.1% of physicians trained by institutions not funded by the program.
4. An expert panel convened by George Mason University in 2002 recommended an increased emphasis on agency activities to support and promote basic nursing.

In response to these findings, the Administration:
1. Proposes to continue the phase-out of most health professions grants consistent with the 2003 Budget and direct resources to activities that are more capable of placing health care providers in medically underserved communities.
2. Proposes to redirect $34 million from advanced education nursing to basic nursing activities, including $12 million to the Nursing Education Loan Repayment program for loan repayment awards and newly authorized scholarships to increase the supply of practicing nurses.

---

**Rating:** Ineffective  
**Program Type:** Competitive Grants

---

**Key Performance Measures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>