



National Society for Histotechnology  
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March 20, 2023

The Honorable Bernie Sanders  
Chair, Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor, and Pensions  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
Ranking Member, Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor, and Pensions  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Request for Information on Causes and Solutions to Healthcare Workforce Shortages

Dear Chairman Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

The National Society for Histotechnology is responding to the *Request for Information on Causes and Solutions to Healthcare Workforce Shortages*. The National Society for Histotechnology is a non-profit professional membership organization representing histology professionals practicing in the medical and public health laboratory workforce. Histotechnology is the science dealing with the structure of cells and their formation into tissues and organs. The profession is responsible for the preparation of all pathological tissue samples removed and collected from the human body. The samples are assessed microscopically for diagnostic, prognostic, and treatment purposes. The National Society for Histotechnology supports practicing histologists worldwide by providing education to train and demonstrate competency in an increasing complex medical laboratory testing environment. We strongly urge the Committee to include the medical and public health laboratory workforce in all policy solutions related to addressing healthcare workforce shortages.

The laboratory workforce has been suffering from staffing shortages that are the result of several factors that have developed over the last 20 years. Low familiarity with laboratory medicine as a career option, declines in the number of training programs and students trained, high educational costs and low pay, have been longstanding issues. COVID has significantly worsened these problems by increasing workload levels, stress, and burnout. Currently, most medical and public health laboratories suffer from significant personnel shortages, and many are operating at or near crisis-mode. Significant staffing shortages in histology are impeding the ability of laboratories to provide timely test results. Prompt and accurate laboratory results are necessary to deliver high quality patient care and are critical to public health.

Currently, the Health Resource and Services Administration administers a number of programs designed to support the healthcare workforce. These programs, in the form of grants to training programs, scholarship and fellowship programs, and loan repayment programs, are generally reserved for other health professionals, such as physicians, nurses, and dentists. Laboratory professionals, and in particular entry-level professionals, are unable to benefit from these programs. To better address the workforce shortages affecting the medical and public health laboratory workforce, **we urge Congress to include medical and public health laboratory professionals in all federal workforce programs.**

We look forward to working with the Senate HELP Committee to address healthcare workforce shortages. If you have any questions, please contact Luis Chiriboga, PhD, NSH Public Policy Task Force Chair at [histo@nsh.org](mailto:histo@nsh.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Santiago".

Jerry Santiago  
President  
National Society for Histotechnology