

PPC Action Alert

Urgent Opportunity for Pediatric Subspecialty Advocacy

We are reaching out with a **timely advocacy opportunity** to address shortages of pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical specialists, and child mental health professionals.

Help us advocate for **funding for the Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program (PSLRP)** to ensure children can receive the specialized care they need.

State of Play on Capitol Hill: Congress is gearing up for the annual federal appropriations process when they determine funding for federal programs and agencies – a months-long process that is kicked off with the president’s budget proposal. PSLRP is one of many key child health programs that Congress must fund each year through this process. In the months ahead, Congress will develop and debate government funding bills that will ultimately need to be signed into law by the president.

It’s important to note, this process is *separate* from the budget reconciliation process playing out right now focused on Medicaid, among other programs. Thank you for your continued advocacy on that front.

Background on PSLRP: In large part due to your advocacy, Congress has provided four years of funding for PSLRP. The program provides \$100,000 in loan repayment for pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical specialists, and child mental health professionals who care for children in underserved areas, addressing critical shortages of these highly trained professionals by lessening financial disincentives for pursuing pediatric specialty training.

The initial investments in PSLRP have been a crucial step forward, but **more funding is needed in FY 2026 to expand the program’s reach.**

That’s where we need your help:

Letters are circulating in the House and the Senate asking lawmakers to support funding for this program for Fiscal Year 2026.

- The Senate letter is being circulated by Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), a gastroenterologist. The deadline to sign this letter is **Friday, May 16.**
- The House letter is being circulated by Rep. Kim Schrier (D-Wash.) and Rep. John Joyce (R-Pa.), a pediatrician and dermatologist, respectively. The deadline to sign this letter is **Wednesday, May 21.**

Our goal is to get as many lawmakers as possible to sign these letters. **Please consider reaching out to your members of Congress as soon as possible as the deadlines are fast approaching!**

Here's how to contact your members of Congress:

By Phone: You can call the **U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121** to be connected to your U.S. representative's and senators' offices. Or you can go to [House.gov](https://www.house.gov) and [Senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov) to find contact information. The contact information for their Washington, DC office is available on their websites.

Talking points

- Hello. My name is {First and last name} from {City/State}. I am an academic pediatrician {insert your area of research expertise e.g., pediatric endocrinology, etc.}, and I am calling today to urge {Senator/Representative's name} to sign a letter supporting funding for the Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program.
 - For the House: The letter in the House is being circulated by Rep. Kim Schrier and Rep. John Joyce.
 - For the Senate: The letter in the Senate is being circulated by Sen. Jack Reed and Sen. Bill Cassidy.
- Across the country, there are significant shortages of pediatric subspecialists and child and adolescent psychiatrists. These are physicians with special training for taking care of children with special health care or mental health needs.
- These shortages lead to long travel distances for parents seeking care for their children and long appointment wait times for developmental screenings, care for type 1 diabetes, and other essential care.
- Many pediatric researchers are trained as subspecialists and dedicate their careers to research on complex health needs like Type 1 diabetes and autism spectrum disorder. Shortages of pediatric subspecialists may also slow the development of the next generation of treatments and cures for young people.
- The Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program will help increase access to pediatric subspecialists who provide care in underserved and rural areas.
- I hope {Representative's name}/{Senator's name} will consider supporting funding for the program and sign the letter.
- Thank you for all you do for children.

By Email: You can email your representative through their website. You can find your U.S. representative by going to [House.gov](https://www.house.gov) and using the "Find Your Representative" feature at the top right of the page. To find your U.S. senators, visit [Senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov) and use the "Find Your Senators" feature at the top left of the page. Email your U.S. representative and senators through the contact form on their websites.

You can customize this email by adding an additional paragraph with specific information about yourself and your state, such as this:

I am an academic pediatrician specializing in {insert your area of research expertise e.g., infectious diseases, etc.}, which means I am {insert potential practical outcome of research e.g., looking for a cure for Type 1 diabetes}.

Email text:

For your U.S. senators:

Subject: Strengthen Child Health and Mental Health in Rural and Underserved Areas

As a constituent, I'm urging you to sign Senator Bill Cassidy and Senator Jack Reed's letter supporting funding for the Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program in FY 2026.

Millions of children reside 1.5 hours or more from needed specialty care. Across the country, there are significant shortages of pediatric subspecialists and child and adolescent psychiatrists, which lead to long travel distances and appointment wait times for developmental screenings, care for type 1 diabetes, and other essential care.

There is also a disparity in the geographic distribution of pediatric subspecialists, resulting in many children in underserved rural and urban areas not receiving timely care. For children with complex medical conditions, their ability to see the right doctor in a reasonable amount of time should not be determined by where they live.

This program will help increase access to pediatric subspecialists who provide care in underserved and rural areas. An increased investment will help expand its reach. It will provide \$100,000 in loan repayment in exchange for three years of providing care for an underserved area, helping address the economic factors that discourage individuals from subspecializing.

Please consider supporting funding for this program and sign the letter being circulated by Senators Reed and Cassidy. Contact Jill Boland in Sen. Reed's office or Ron Anderson in Sen. Cassidy's office for more information.

Thank you.

For your U.S. representative:

Subject: Strengthen Child Health and Mental Health in Rural and Underserved Areas

As a constituent, I'm urging you to sign Representative Kim Schrier and Representative John Joyce's letter supporting funding for the Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program in FY 2026.

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Please consider supporting funding for this program and sign the letter being circulated by Representatives Schrier and Joyce. Contact Amy Zhou in Rep. Schrier's office or Matt Tucker in Rep. Joyce's office for more information.

Thank you.