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## NEWS RELEASE

### **Kentucky Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Members Heading to Capitol Hill to Advocate for Health & Physical Education**

*SHAPE America Members Will Ask Congress to Fully Fund Federal Title IV, Part A ESSA Grant*

Lexington, KY April 16, 2017 — In response to serious threats of cuts to the federal funding of the [\*Every Student Succeeds Act\*](#) (ESSA), six members of the Kentucky Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (KAHPERD) from across Kentucky are headed to Capitol Hill to advocate for full funding to support professional development for teachers and health and physical education programs in schools.

Audra Deli-Hoofnagle, Carla Vidoni, Candace Young, Jamie Sparks, Juli Neace and Sara Rucker will be asking lawmakers to fully fund the federal education program Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants, under ESSA.

KAHPERD members will join more than 200 fellow health and physical educators representing nearly 50 states on Capitol Hill as part of the SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators 10<sup>th</sup> annual member lobby day, April 25-26.

When ESSA was passed in 2015, health and physical education were designated as part of a well-rounded education, making these subjects eligible for federal education funding for the first time. Under the new program, Title IV, Part A, schools will receive funding to support a well-rounded education, safe and healthy student programs, and effective use of technology. Despite Title IV, Part A being authorized at \$1.65 billion dollars, several proposals in Congress would *significantly* underfund ESSA and put health and physical education at risk of not being able to thrive in schools.

“Under this block grant, we are going to be competing with many other subject areas and programs for financial support. We need to make sure that the pot of money is as large as possible to ensure that health and physical education programs will have the chance to access at least a portion of that funding,” says KAHPERD President-Elect Candace Young.

During these Capitol Hill meetings, teachers and advocates will offer insight and perspective on the negative impact of marginalizing health and physical education in schools. They will also share success stories and the links that exist between health, physical education and academic achievement.

“I had the opportunity to attend a town hall meeting hosted by KDE Commissioner Pruitt with Dr. Chris Boling to share the importance of prioritizing student health outcomes within Kentucky’s proposed accountability system. ESSA is a tremendous opportunity for states to develop their own accountability plans. Kentucky is very fortunate to have one of the most comprehensive systems of gathering shareholder feedback. However Congress must now financially prioritize



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this new educational system to fully fund the measures that all Kentuckians have had an opportunity to be a voice for. Kentucky's proposed system identifies school success measures such as access and opportunity to health education and physical education," says KAHPERD member Juli Neace.

SHAPE America's Senior Manager of Advocacy Carly Wright says it is critical to set a high precedence for funding as ESSA implementation begins in the 2017-2018 school year.

"By September, all states will have considered feedback from education stakeholders, including health and physical educators, and will submit their ESSA plans to the U.S. Department of Education and set funding priorities for school districts," says Wright. "We are laser-focused on ensuring that health and physical education are on top of the priority list."

"Kentucky earned a letter of grade of D on the Citizen-Readiness score from the Council for Strong America, a national bi-partisan group. A major contributor to that poor score comes from our state's poor health rankings that impact every sector of society and especially our work-force," says KAHPERD Past-President Jamie Sparks. "The only way to change this bleak outlook is to prioritize and fund quality health and physical education programs. Every person in every community in Kentucky will benefit from this funding."

In addition to pushing for full funding for Title IV, Part A, advocates will also ask Congress to support robust funding for Title II, Part A, which supports professional development for all school employees and Title IV, Part B, which supports after-school programs for low-income students.

Effective health and physical education are the cornerstones to empowering students to lead active, healthy lives, which is SHAPE America's national commitment called [50 Million Strong by 2029](#).

For more event details, visit [SPEAK Out! Day](#). Find updates during the two-day event by following @kyahperd @SHAPE\_America and #MoreTitleIV on Twitter.

### **About SHAPE America**

SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators is committed to ensuring all children have the opportunity to lead healthy, physically active lives. As the nation's largest membership organization of health and physical education professionals, SHAPE America works with its 50 state affiliates and national partners to support initiatives such as the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, *Let's Move!* Active Schools (now Active Schools) and the Jump Rope For Heart/Hoops For Heart programs.

Since its founding in 1885, the organization has defined excellence in physical education, and our resources provide the leadership, professional development and advocacy that support health and physical educators at every level - from preschool to university graduate programs. For more information, visit [www.shapeamerica.org](http://www.shapeamerica.org).