



**Testimony Prepared for the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**

**National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

**March 8, 2017**

**Submitted by: Juliann G. Sebastian, PhD, RN, FAAN, Board Chair,  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing**

As the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) represents over 800 schools of nursing that educate more than 477,000 students. AACN respectfully requests that the subcommittee invests in America's health in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 by providing **\$244 million for HRSA's Nursing Workforce Development programs** (authorized under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.]), at least **\$2 billion above the FY 2017 funding level for the National Institutes of Health, in addition to funds included in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255). Included in this funding level, AACN requests \$160 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR).**\* Lastly, we urge the subcommittee to provide **\$380 million for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) in FY 2018.**

\*The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, of which AACN is a member, requests at least \$2 billion above the FY 2017 funding level for NIH, in addition to funds included in the 21st Century Cures Act. The request level of \$160 million for NINR denotes the same percentage increase for NIH applied to NINR.

As integral members of the healthcare team, and as the largest sector of the workforce with nearly four million licensed providers and students,<sup>1</sup> nurses collaborate with other professions and disciplines to improve the quality of health and health care in America. Nurses serve in a multitude of settings, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, community centers, local and state health departments, schools, workplaces, and patients' homes. Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs; including Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs) and Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs)) treat and educate patients across the entire life span and ensure individuals follow through with care plans for optimal health outcomes. These programmatic requests will help ensure that communities across the nation have access to high-quality nursing care by supporting the education, research, and workforce components of the nursing profession.

**Request: \$244 million for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2018.**

For over fifty years, the Nursing Workforce Development programs have helped build the supply and distribution of highly-educated nurses. These programs strengthen nursing education at all levels, from entry preparation through graduate study, as well as support nursing faculty who teach today's students to be tomorrow's nurses. These federal dollars yield short-term and long-term return on investments for students, practicing nurses, academic institutions, the healthcare system, and above all, America's patients.

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<sup>1</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2017). *Active RN Licenses: A profile of nursing licensure in the U.S. as of February 23, 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncsbn.org/6161.htm>.

*Return on Investment: Increasing Diversity Within the Nursing Pipeline to Reflect Patient Populations*

According to AACN data, 25% of all baccalaureate and graduate nursing students come from ethnically or culturally diverse backgrounds.<sup>2</sup> Ensuring that this trend continues to grow will promote a diverse nursing pipeline that reflects an increasingly diverse population, which bolsters positive patient outcomes. Therefore, supporting prospective and current students is a worthy investment. The Title VIII Workforce Diversity Grants specifically targets groups underrepresented in nursing. In Academic Year 2014-2015, the program supported 13,225 students and aspiring students and partnered with over 900 clinical training sites.<sup>3</sup>

*Return on Investment: Supporting Long-Term Care and Advance Care Planning*

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of individuals age 65 years or older in the United States is projected to nearly double (48 million to 88 million) by year 2050.<sup>4</sup> Coinciding with an aging population are rising rates of chronic illness, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and arthritis. In fact, approximately half of all adults across the nation (117 million people) have one or more chronic health conditions, and one in four adults have two or more.<sup>5</sup> This scenario begs the question: how will the healthcare system and individuals address long-term care needs well into old age? The Title VIII Comprehensive Geriatric Education Program supports the education of nurses who provide direct care to elderly Americans. The funding also supports traineeships for students pursuing advanced education nursing degrees in geriatric nursing, long-term care, and gero-psychiatric nursing. In Academic Year 2014-2015,

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<sup>2</sup> American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2016). *2015-2016 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing*. Washington, D.C.

<sup>3</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration. (2016) *Justification of estimates for appropriations committees*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrsa.gov/about/budget/budgetjustification2017.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). An Aging World: 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2016/cb16-54.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). Chronic Diseases: The Leading Causes of Death and Disability in the United States. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/>.

the program supported 22,743 students and trainees primed to serve the unique needs of America's aging population.<sup>3</sup>

**Request: \$2 billion above the FY 2017 funding level for the National Institutes of Health, in addition to funds included in the 21st Century Cures Act. Included in this amount is \$160 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research.**

*Return on Investment: Innovations that Improve Care Delivery*

As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH, NINR develops knowledge to build the scientific foundation for clinical practice to improve healthcare delivery across the entire lifespan. Nurse scientists, often working collaboratively with other health professions, are generating and translating new findings in cross-cutting facets of healthcare and biomedical research, including big data and data science, precision health, and omics.

*Return on Investment: Bolstering the Nurse Researcher Pipeline*

In addition, NINR allots a generous portion of its budget towards training new nursing scientists, thus helping to sustain the longevity and success of nursing research. According to 2015-2016 AACN data, there are 4,912 doctoral students pursuing their PhD within AACN member schools, many of whom will also serve as faculty and researchers. NINR training opportunities, such as the National Research Service Awards, help new nurse researchers conduct independent research and collaborate in transdisciplinary research. These future nurse scientists will help discover new and effective care technologies and methods to improve patient wellness.

**Request: \$380 million for the National Health Service Corps in FY 2018.**

According to HRSA, as of January 2017, there were over 65 million individuals living in primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), over 51 million living in a dental HPSA, and over 106 million living in a mental health HPSA.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the projected employment of NPs, CRNAs, and CNMs is expected to grow 31% between 2012-2022.<sup>7</sup> APRNs are a real solution to the challenge of employing high-quality providers in primary care and underserved communities. The NHSC Scholarship Program and Loan Repayment Program reach the millions living in underserved communities by providing financial support to graduate health professions students and clinicians (including APRNs) who are committed to practicing in these regions.

*Return on Investment: Increasing Access to Care in Rural and Underserved Areas*

As of FY 2015, the total field strength of the NHSC was 9,683 providers, of which, 2,872 (30%, including mental health nurse practitioners) were providing mental health services and 2,020 nurse practitioners and certified nurse-midwives (21% of NHSC participants) offered primary care services.<sup>8</sup> It is imperative that these programs receive an annual discretionary appropriation to ensure stability and necessary care services reach patients in all corners of the country.

Thank you for considering AACN's requests for FY 2018. If you have any questions, or if AACN can be of assistance, please contact AACN's Director of Government Affairs, Lauren Inouye, at [Linouye@aacn.nche.edu](mailto:Linouye@aacn.nche.edu). or 202-463-6930 ext. 271.

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<sup>6</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration. (2017). *Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statistics*. Retrieved from: [https://ersrs.hrsa.gov/ReportServer?/HGDW\\_Reports/BCD\\_HPSA/BCD\\_HPSA\\_SCR50\\_Qtr\\_Smry\\_HTML&rc:Toolbar=false](https://ersrs.hrsa.gov/ReportServer?/HGDW_Reports/BCD_HPSA/BCD_HPSA_SCR50_Qtr_Smry_HTML&rc:Toolbar=false).

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014). *Occupational Outlook Handbook. Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Congressional Research Service. (2016). *National health service corps: background and trends in funding and recruitment*. Retrieved from: [https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20160517\\_R43920\\_7055a9e9fb437c0b39ff70834951107c5b8d91bc.pdf](https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20160517_R43920_7055a9e9fb437c0b39ff70834951107c5b8d91bc.pdf).