



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

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

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

**National Institutes of Health (NIH)
June 1, 2017**

As the national voice for academic nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) represents over 800 schools of nursing that educate over 477,000 students and employ more than 19,000 full-time faculty members. 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 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255). **Included in this funding level, AACN requests \$160 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR).**¹ Lastly, we urge the Subcommittee to provide **\$380 million for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) in FY 2018.**

As integral members of the healthcare team, and as the largest sector of the workforce with four million licensed providers and students,^{2,3} 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.

¹ 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.

² 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>.

³ The American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2017). *Snapshot of U.S. nursing education, 2016*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/resources/policy-briefs>.

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. The federal funding yields short and long-term returns on investment that link directly to the diversity, quality, and accessibility of healthcare services.

Return on Investment: Increasing Diversity and Access to Primary Care to Meet Patients' Needs

Title VIII programs address the need for a diverse nursing workforce that can provide quality health care for a culturally-diverse patient population and reduce health disparities. The Title VIII Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD) program recruits and retains students from disadvantaged backgrounds underrepresented in nursing. In Academic Year 2015-2016, the NWD program trained 7,337 students. In addition, grantees partnered with 595 clinical training sites, of which approximately 44 percent were in medically underserved communities.⁴

In Academic Year 2015-2016, the Advanced Nursing Education (ANE) Program supported 10,238 nursing students and partnered with 2,596 healthcare delivery sites, 51 percent of which were in primary care settings.⁴ ANE grants prepare our nation's future APRNs and other nurses requiring a graduate degree.

A living example of success is the Pittsburg State University's (PSU) Irene Bradley School of Nursing in Pittsburg, Kansas. PSU is a recipient of the Title VIII ANE and NWD programs and has clinical training sites in nine counties ranked in the bottom quartile of the state's Health Index.⁵ The Title VIII funds support family nurse practitioner students who are providing quality primary care services to these vulnerable populations.

AACN urges the Subcommittee to preserve funding for each of the Nursing Workforce Development programs, including those that were proposed to be eliminated in the President's FY 2018 budget: Advanced Nursing Education; Nursing Workforce Diversity; Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention; Nurse Faculty Loan Program; and Comprehensive Geriatric Education.⁶ These programs are vital investments to support the supply and distribution of qualified nurses to meet our nation's healthcare needs.

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 (P.L. 114-255). Included in this amount is \$160 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research.

Return on Investment: Data-driven Research to Promote Care across the Lifespan

As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at the National Institutes of Health, NINR develops knowledge to build the scientific foundation for reducing disease and promoting health and wellness across the entire lifespan. Nurse scientists, often working collaboratively with other

⁴ Health Resources and Services Administration. (2017). *Justifications of estimates for appropriations committees*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hrsa.gov/about/budget/budgetjustification2018.pdf>.

⁵ American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2017). *Title VIII: Community impact across the nation*. Retrieved from: <https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/7924760c006b72aeafa6215145aeb2e0/community-impact-title-viii/index.html>.

⁶ The Title VIII Comprehensive Geriatric Education program was combined into a broader HRSA Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program.

health professionals, generate and translate new findings in cross-cutting facets of healthcare and biomedical research, including big data and data science, precision health, and genomics.

In addition, NINR allots a generous portion of its budget towards training new nursing scientists, thus helping to sustain the longevity and success of the nursing research pipeline. According to 2016-2017 AACN data, there are 4,873 research-focused doctoral students within AACN member schools, many of whom will also serve as faculty in our nation's nursing schools.⁷ NINR research opportunities, such as the Symptoms Research Methodologies Boot Camp, integrate data science into nursing research to discover new technologies and methods to improve patient care.⁸

An NINR-supported nurse scientist Jacquelyn Taylor, PhD, RN, FAAN, Associate Dean of Diversity and Inclusion and Associate Professor of Nursing at the Yale School of Nursing, is conducting innovative work to improve patient outcomes. As the principal investigator on a five-year study, Dr. Taylor evaluates health disparities in hypertension in the African-American population. Her goal is to develop nursing interventions to prevent and reduce gene-environment risks associated with hypertension.⁹

America's patients depend on funding for the critical work of nurse scientists, such as Dr. Taylor's, to help improve health, cure diseases, and deliver quality care.

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

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

According to HRSA, as of January 2017, there were over 65 million individuals living in Health Professional Shortage Areas.¹⁰ Moreover, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the projected employment of NPs, CRNAs, and CNMs is expected to grow 31 percent between 2012 and 2022.¹¹ APRNs are a real solution to the challenge of employing high-quality providers in primary care and underserved communities. The National Health Service Corps 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. To ensure the programs' stability, and more importantly, that necessary care reaches America's patients, it is imperative that these programs receive an annual discretionary appropriation in addition to any mandatory funding.

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 or 202-463-6930 ext. 271.

⁷ American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2017). *2016-2017 Enrollment and graduations in baccalaureate and graduate programs in nursing*. Washington, D.C.

⁸ National Institute of Nursing Research. (2017) *Advancing nursing research through data science*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ninr.nih.gov/researchandfunding/datascience>.

⁹ National Institute of Nursing Research. (2017). *Nurse scientist receives Presidential Early Career Award*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ninr.nih.gov/newsandinformation/newsandnotes/taylor-pecase>.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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>.