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May 15, 2026

American Association of Colleges of Nursing
655 K Street, NW
Suite 750
Washington, DC 20001

Dear AACN,

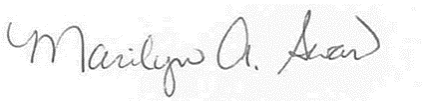
I am writing to nominate the Academic-Practice Partnership between Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) and Bloomington Public Schools (BPS) at The Health Commons at Pond (Pond), for the Exemplary Academic-Practice Partnership Award.

Pond is a free, school-based health clinic founded in 2017 to meet the needs of a rapidly diversifying community with limited access to affordable, high-quality care. As demand grew, BPS partnered with the MSU School of Nursing graduate program, creating a model that supports both local families and future nurses. Together, MSU and BPS operate a no-fee clinic where children and families receive a range of health-related services, while giving nursing and allied health students meaningful clinical experience. Pond's mission is to partner with patients, families, and communities to promote health and wellness through clinical practice, education, and research.

Pond offers preventive care, vaccines, sports physicals, primary health care services, and mental health therapy to children and teens, ages 0-21. In 2025, Pond Clinic completed 833 patient visits with 551 unduplicated patients. Medical services are delivered by nursing faculty who are nurse practitioners, supported by undergraduate nursing and nurse practitioner students. Mental health therapy is provided by a therapist-in-training and therapy students under faculty supervision. Pond also hosts DNP quality improvement projects. During 2025-26, Pond expanded services to include mental health therapy, wound care and suturing, fluoride varnish treatments, and a Teen Advisory Board offering high-school students hands-on exposure to health-care careers. Funding has been secured to add audiology testing, group therapy, transportation vouchers, vision-care vouchers, and discounted prescriptions in 2026-27.

The Academic-Practice Partnership between MSU and BPS has created Pond, a clinic that delivers essential care to children and teens in a disadvantaged community while providing immersive training for the next generation of healthcare professionals. As Pond expands and strengthens its clinical and mental-health services, it also deepens the healthcare talent pipeline through meaningful, hands-on learning across disciplines. This collaborative, community-centered work is truly worthy of recognition.

Sincerely,



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