

**Testimony Prepared for the U.S. Senate 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 & National Institutes of Health**

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*Submitted by: Ann H. Cary, PhD, MPH, RN, FNAP, FAAN, Board Chair,*

*American Association of Colleges of Nursing*

**Ensuring the Future of America's Nursing Workforce**

As the national voice for academic nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) represents over 543,000 nursing students and more than 45,000 nurse faculty. On behalf of its 825 member schools across the country, AACN thanks the subcommittee for its leadership and support of Nursing Workforce Development programs, which have a direct impact on the nursing pipeline and access to high-quality, evidence-based care. The association respectfully requests your continued investment in America's health in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 by providing **\$266 million for the Nursing Workforce Development programs** (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.]), administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and at least **\$41.6 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)**, which includes funds provided to NIH through the 21st Century Cures Act [P.L. No: 114-255] for targeted initiatives. Within this overall NIH funding level, AACN requests **\$173 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)**.

**America's Growing Healthcare and Nursing Workforce Needs**

As the largest sector of the healthcare workforce, more than four million 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.<sup>1</sup> The nursing workforce is vital to meeting current and future healthcare demands in all areas, including rural and underserved communities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the projected RN Workforce demand is expected to increase 15% by 2026, representing a call for an additional 438,100 nurses.<sup>2</sup> Demand for most APRNs is expected to grow by 31%.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2019). *Active RN Licenses: A profile of nursing licensure in the U.S. as of April 5, 2019*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncsbn.org/6161.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016). Occupational Outlook Handbook- Registered Nurses. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016). Occupational Outlook Handbook- Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm>.



An aging population and projected retirements from the current nursing workforce are contributing factors that impact nurse supply and demand. Nursing schools across the country are working to meet the rising demand and educate all qualified applicants interested in the profession. Though AACN reported a 3.7% enrollment increase in entry-level baccalaureate programs in nursing in 2018, this increase is not sufficient to meet the projected demand for nursing services, including the need for more nurse faculty, researchers, and primary care providers.<sup>4</sup> This is why preserving and enhancing federal resources for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs and NINR are essential to bolstering a robust nursing workforce and implementing new science that will positively impact health outcomes now and in the future.

### **Investing in America’s Health: Requesting \$266 Million for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2020**

For over fifty years, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs have consistently and continually sustained the supply and distribution of highly-educated nurses by strengthening nursing education at all levels, from entry preparation through graduate study. Through grants, scholarships, and loan repayments programs, these indispensable federal investments positively impact the profession’s ability to serve America’s patients in all communities, especially those most in need.

#### *Educating and Sustaining a Strong Nursing Workforce:*

Each of the programs that comprise Title VIII have a unique mission aimed at promoting nursing care in all communities, especially in vulnerable and underserved areas. One, in particular, the Nurse Faculty Loan Program, helps ensure we have faculty to prepare the nursing students of today to be leaders in the health profession tomorrow. According to AACN’s report on 2018-2019 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing, U.S. nursing schools turned away more than 75,000 qualified students, and pointed to a shortage of faculty and/or clinical preceptors as a primary reason for not accepting all qualified applicants into their programs.<sup>5</sup> The Nurse Faculty Loan Program helped fill this critical need by awarding grants to 84 schools, supporting 1,998 nursing students pursuing a degree to become nurse faculty during the 2016-2017 Academic Year.<sup>6</sup> Among those graduating trainees, 92% intend to teach nursing.<sup>7</sup> This is just one program under Title VIII that provides invaluable support to nursing education, practice, and retention. To ensure the stability of our nursing workforce, our total request of \$266 million would support all Title VIII programs, including:

- Advanced Nursing Education (Sec. 811), which includes the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeships and Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships;
- Nursing Workforce Diversity (Sec. 821);

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<sup>4</sup> American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2019). Nursing Shortage Fact Sheet as of April 5, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/Factsheets/Nursing-Shortage-Factsheet.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2019). Nursing Shortage Fact Sheet as of April 5, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/News/Factsheets/Nursing-Shortage-Factsheet.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2019 Health Resources and Services Administration Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2019.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2019 Health Resources and Services Administration Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2019.pdf>.

- Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention (Sec. 831);
- NURSE Corps Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs (Sec. 846);
- Nurse Faculty Loan Program (Sec. 846A); and
- Comprehensive Geriatric Education (Sec. 865).

### **The Importance of Nursing Science: Requesting \$173 Million for National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)**

The healthcare community must continuously investigate and research new methods to ensure that we are providing the best care possible. As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH, NINR plays a vital role in improving care and is on the cutting edge of new innovations that impact how nurses are educated and how they practice. Nursing scientists are moving the field forward in areas as diverse as genomics, big data, precision health, and data science, often working with other health professionals. Additionally, NINR allocates a generous portion of its budget to educating nurse researchers, many of whom also serve as nurse faculty.<sup>8</sup> This ensures the sustainability and longevity of nursing research.

Strong investments in Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs and NINR have a direct impact on the nursing pipeline and patient access to high-quality, evidence-based care in all communities across the nation. AACN respectfully requests continued support in FY 2020 of **\$266 million for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs** and at least **\$41.6 billion for the National Institute of Health, which includes \$173 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research**. Together, we can ensure that such investments promote innovation and improve health care in America.

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<sup>8</sup> National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research. *The NINR Strategic Plan: Advancing Science, Improving Lives*. Retrieved from [https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/www.ninr.nih.gov/files/NINR\\_StratPlan2016\\_reduced.pdf](https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/www.ninr.nih.gov/files/NINR_StratPlan2016_reduced.pdf).