



March 2, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) thanks the Subcommittee for their leadership and support of Nursing Workforce Development programs, which have a direct impact on the future nursing workforce and access to high-quality, evidence-based care. As we celebrate the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, and as you consider and advance the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS-ED) appropriations bill, AACN respectfully requests your continued support for the nursing workforce through:

- **\$278 million for the Nursing Workforce Development Programs** (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et. seq]); and
- **\$44.7 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including at least \$182 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), from within the overall NIH funding level.**

As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN represents 840 schools of nursing that educate more than 500,000 students and employ 45,000 faculty. Collectively, these institutions graduate our nation's registered nurses (RN), advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), faculty, and researchers. Our members are committed to preparing a highly educated nursing workforce and strengthening the foundation of nursing science.

Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs

For over fifty years, these programs have consistently and continually built 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 essential federal investments positively impact the profession's ability to serve America's patients across the country, especially those most in need; bolster diversity within the workforce; and increase the number of nurses trained to serve our aging population.

Federal support of Title VIII programs and the nursing pipeline is critical. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand in the RN workforce is expected to increase 12% by 2028, representing the demand for an additional 371,500 jobs.¹ Demand for certain APRNs (nurse practitioners, certified

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). Occupational Outlook Handbook- Registered Nurses. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>.

registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse-midwives) is expected to grow by 26%.² To meet this growing need, it is essential that we sustain and expand funding for all nursing workforce programs.

Each of the programs that comprise Title VIII have a unique and vital mission aimed at promoting nursing care throughout all communities, including vulnerable and underserved areas. These programs also offer opportunities to help educate nurses and address patient demand. For example, the Advanced Nursing Education (ANE) programs increase the number of APRN's in the primary care workforce and supported more than 9,000 students in Academic Year 2018-2019 alone.³ The ANE programs support students studying to become our nation's nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse-midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and other nurses requiring a master's or doctoral degree by providing Federal support, as well as faculty development, to ensure a robust nursing workforce.

Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs also support the nursing faculty who prepare today's students to be tomorrow's nurses. This is done through the Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP), which in Academic Year 2018-2019, awarded 80 schools NFLP grants that supported 2,277 graduate nursing students.⁴ It is vital that we continue to grow the nurse faculty pipeline in order to prepare the next generation of nurses.

The Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD) program is another example of a successful Title VIII initiative. In Academic Year 2018-2019, this program awarded grants supporting 11,067 nursing students from disadvantaged backgrounds.⁵ The recruitment of culturally and economically diverse individuals to nursing positively impacts the classroom, professional practice environments, and ultimately the patient.

From the classroom to the bedside, nurses and nursing students are integral members of the healthcare team. Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs are critical to ensuring a robust nurse workforce to meet our nation's healthcare needs. Your support for continued federal investment and increased funding for Title VIII programs in FY 2021 and beyond is essential to ensuring a healthier America through access to nursing care.

National Institute of Nursing Research

Scientific research and discovery are pivotal to equipping nurses to provide evidence-based care. As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH, the NINR is an integral part to improving care and is on the cutting edge of new innovations that impact how nurses are educated and how they practice. In fact, 80% of research focused educational training grants at schools of nursing are funded by NINR.⁶ Through these grants and others, nurse scientists, often working collaboratively with other health

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). 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> .

³ Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2021 Health Resources and Services Administration Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. Pages 141-143 <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2021.pdf>

⁴ Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2021 Health Resources and Services Administration Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. Page 154 <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2021.pdf>

⁵ Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2021 Health Resources and Services Administration Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. Page 146 <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2021.pdf>

⁶ Journal of Professional Nursing (2019) National Institute of Health (NIH) funding patterns in Schools of Nursing: Who is funding nursing science research and who is conducting research at Schools of Nursing?
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S8755722319301164?via=ihub#!>

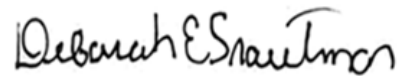
professionals, are generating and translating new findings in areas such as big data and data science, precision health, and genomics.⁷

Supporting the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and NINR is essential to sustaining a strong nursing workforce that is able to care for our nation's population and keep America healthy. AACN appreciates the Subcommittee's consideration of these FY 2021 requests and looks forward to working with you as we continue to strengthen academic nursing and the nursing workforce. If AACN can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact AACN's Director of Government Affairs, Rachel Stevenson, at (202) 463-6930, ext. 271 or rstevenson@aacnnursing.org.

Sincerely,



Ann H. Cary, PhD, MPH, RN, FNAP, FAAN
Board Chair



Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and CEO

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Senator Richard Shelby
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Senator Chris Murphy
Senator Joe Manchin

⁷ 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.