

August 18, 2022

Dr. Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Dr. Elnahal:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), we congratulate you on your confirmation as the Under Secretary for Health at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff.

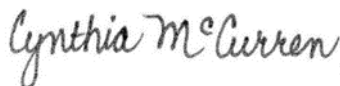
As you know, nurses and nursing students have continually served on the frontlines of our health care system, including educating, tracing, testing, and vaccinating our communities during COVID. We at AACN have a vested interest in supporting this work, as over 850 member institutions are preparing over 565,000 nursing students to enter the workforce, including at the VA. Given the critical role nurses play, we look forward to working with you in addressing public health challenges, providing evidence-based care, and improving health care across the nation, including for our veterans and their families.

As the collective voice for academic nursing, AACN serves as the catalyst for excellence and innovation in nursing education, research, and practice, especially in rural and underserved communities. Our [2021-2022 Federal Policy Agenda](#) reflects our core policy values of sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity. We believe these principles are essential for strengthening and advancing our nation's health.

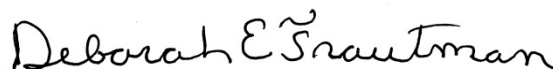
The work you have accomplished throughout your career, including overseeing substantial improvements in patient safety, underscore the dedication you have to ensuring all individuals receive high quality healthcare. AACN is committed to working with the you and we hope to further this relationship as we work together to prepare a diverse, highly qualified, and community-focused nursing workforce.

Toward this effort, we can connect you with nursing leaders, researchers, and policy experts who offer critical insights as you take the helm as the Under Secretary of Health at the VA. We welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss how we can assist in your work. If we can be of any assistance, please contact AACN by reaching out to Dr. Colleen Leners, Director of Policy at cleners@aacnnursing.org, or Rachel Stevenson, Director of Government Affairs at rstenenson@aacnursing.org.

Sincerely,



Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN
Board Chair



Deborah E. Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and Chief Executive Officer