

October 2, 2026
The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Wyden,

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) appreciates your ongoing efforts to proactively gather information to inform future healthcare policy options aimed at improving healthcare for all Americans. As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN represents more than 890 schools of nursing across the country, which engage more than 58,000 faculty members and 570,000 students.¹ Collectively, these institutions prepare Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs),² faculty, researchers, and frontline providers. AACN is committed to preparing a highly educated nursing workforce, strengthening the foundation of nursing science, and advancing innovative healthcare solutions.

The strength of our healthcare system depends on a strong and steady supply of qualified clinicians. To meet growing healthcare demands across our nation, AACN urges the Senate Finance Committee to invest in nursing education and the nursing workforce by advancing the following legislative proposals within the Committee's jurisdiction:

- Creating a permanent Graduate Nursing Education funding stream in Medicare to support clinical education for nursing students.
- Advancing the Providing Real-World Education and Clinical Experience by Precepting Tomorrow's (PRECEPT) Nurses Act (S.131).
- Advancing the Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act (S.1548).

Support America's Health by Investing in Graduate Nursing Education

AACN urges the Committee to consider and advance legislation, such as the Educating Future Nurses Act (H.R.10410), that would establish a national Graduate Nursing Education (GNE) program under Medicare where hospitals, partnering with schools of nursing, receive payments for the costs associated with providing clinical training for APRNs. Similar measures have been introduced by Finance Committee Democrats in previous Congresses. The preparation of future nurses depends not only on the strength of nursing education programs, but also on the availability of clinical training opportunities and experienced preceptors to guide students in practice. A national GNE program could further incentivize clinicians to serve as nurse preceptors, strengthen academic-practice partnerships, and expand high-quality clinical education opportunities, ultimately supporting workforce readiness and access to care for Medicare beneficiaries and communities across the nation.

Medicare support for clinical nursing education is not a new concept, as the Committee can build on the successful GNE demonstration operated by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation between 2012 and 2016. The GNE demonstration provided funding through Medicare for hospitals to partner with schools of nursing, community-based care settings, and other hospitals. This demonstration illustrated the

¹ About the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. Retrieved from: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/about-aacn>

² APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

efficacy of using Medicare reimbursements to support clinical training for APRNs who deliver crucial care to program beneficiaries.³

Nursing care is foundational to improving health outcomes, advancing prevention, and ensuring access to timely, coordinated care, particularly for Medicare beneficiaries who often have complex and ongoing health needs. As you are aware, investment in educational pathways is critical to meeting the healthcare needs of the nation. This includes supporting the growing demand for nurses. For example, each year through 2035, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates an average of 32,200 openings for most APRNs, including nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and nurse practitioners. This represents 36% growth, which significantly outpaces the 3% projected growth across all occupations.⁴ Supporting a national GNE program is particularly important for communities across the country as 87% of nurse practitioners are educated and prepared in programs that focus on primary care,⁵ and certified registered nurse anesthetists represent more than 80% of anesthesia providers in rural counties.⁶

As the demand for healthcare continues to grow, especially in rural and underserved communities, AACN urges the Committee to support and advance legislation creating a national GNE program that strengthens the nursing workforce to meet this need. This permanent funding mechanism would support strong collaborations between schools of nursing and practice partners and should be inclusive of academic institutions that do not have a preexisting connection to a hospital system. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to advance legislation that creates a national GNE program and supports education pathways to move our APRNs from the classrooms to communities across the country.

Advance the Providing Real-World Education and Clinical Experience by Precepting Tomorrow's (PRECEPT) Nurses Act (S.131)

The PRECEPT Nurses Act (S.131) is a bipartisan, bicameral bill that would provide a \$2,000 federal tax credit to nurses and other eligible healthcare providers who serve at least 200 hours as a clinical preceptor to RN students, APRN students, and newly hired licensed nurses in Health Professional Shortage Areas. Preceptors are nurses working in healthcare settings who mentor, monitor, teach, and assess early-career nurses. They are critical in helping new nurses develop the skills and knowledge necessary to provide care in an increasingly complex healthcare environment.⁷

Preceptors also play a role in nurse retention as they provide both training and a strong support system. A 2019 systematic review found that preceptorship programs reduced turnover by an average of 11%.⁸ This tax incentive model has been successfully implemented in several states, and research has found that financial incentives can help attract and retain high-quality preceptors while also mitigating some of the

³ IMPAQ. 2019. The Graduate Nurse Education Demonstration Project: Final Evaluation Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/files/reports/gne-final-eval-rpt.pdf>

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2026. 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#tab-1>

⁵ American Association of Nurse Practitioners. 2025. Nurse Practitioners in Primary Care. Retrieved from: <https://www.aanp.org/advocacy/advocacy-resource/position-statements/nurse-practitioners-in-primary-care>

⁶ AANA Get the Facts. Access to Care. Retrieved from: <https://www.aana.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Get-the-Facts-Access-General.pdf>

⁷ Trede, F. et. al. 2016. Conceptualizations and perceptions of the nurse preceptor's role: A scoping review. *Nurse Education Today*, (36) 268-274. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0260691715003020>

⁸ Brook, J. et. al. 2019. Characteristics of successful interventions to reduce turnover and increase retention of early career nurses: A systematic review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, (91) 47-51. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0020748918302591>

effects of occupational burnout.⁹ The PRECEPT Nurses Act would establish a seven-year pilot program to test this innovative solution at the national level and is broadly supported by the nursing community.¹⁰

Advance the Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act (S.1548)

Another promising avenue to support our nursing workforce is through the bipartisan, bicameral Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act (S.1548), which supports nurses and nursing students participating in the vital Nurse Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment programs. Unlike similar programs, such as the National Health Service Corps, the funding from participation in the Nurse Corps is subject to federal taxes. Enacting the Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act, which is broadly supported by the nursing community,¹¹ would provide consistency across similar federal workforce programs and further support nurses who are interested in serving in rural and underserved communities.

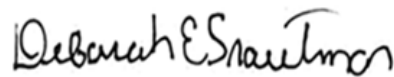
The Nurse Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment programs help ensure that nursing students and nurses are incentivized to work in Critical Shortage Facilities in Health Professional Shortage Areas and underserved communities. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, the Nurse Corps provided 1,783 awards in the form of nursing student scholarships and loan repayment opportunities for nursing program graduates.¹² This has a direct impact on patient care as Nurse Corps recipients dedicate at least two years of their career to working in a critical shortage facility or as nurse faculty. Data shows that this program also ensures nurses stay in their communities as 94% of Nurse Corps participants were retained in service at a Critical Shortage Facility for at least one year after completion of their service commitment.¹³ By passing the Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act, Congress can relieve this tax burden and further incentivize nursing students and nurses to serve where they are most needed.

Investments in our current and future nursing workforce are investments in our nation's health. The opportunities outlined above provide concrete measures the Committee can pursue to ensure patients across the country can access high-quality nursing care as healthcare needs continue to grow. From investing in graduate nursing education to leveraging the federal tax system in support of nurses working in rural and underserved communities, Congress can take bold action to meet current healthcare demands and secure future access to the critical care provided by our nurses. We appreciate your consideration of these impactful opportunities. If our organization can be of any assistance, please contact AACN's Chief Government Affairs and Policy Officer, Rachel Minahan, at rminahan@aacnnursing.org.

Sincerely,



Julie Sanford, PhD, RN, ANEF, FAAN
Board Chair



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

⁹ Novotny, N. and D. Stark. 2020. Nationwide use, challenges, facilitators, and impact of preceptors in prelicensure clinical nursing education. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 10(6) 36-46. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciedupress.com/journal/index.php/jnep/article/view/16885>

¹⁰ Nursing Community Coalition. 2025. Letter Thanking Members of Congress for Introducing the PRECEPT Nurses Act. Retrieved from: https://www.thenursingcommunity.org/files/ugd/148923_6d9626fb00fa48f188759622217a5040.pdf

¹¹ Nursing Community Coalition. 2025. Letter Thanking Members of Congress for Introducing the Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act. Retrieved from: https://www.thenursingcommunity.org/files/ugd/148923_cd13178aea1a4e84b37d91c98021996f.pdf

¹² Department of Health and Human Services. 2026. Fiscal Year 2027 Administration for a Healthy America Budget Justification. Page 379. Retrieved from: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2027-aha-cj.pdf>

¹³ Ibid. Page 378.