



June 8, 2018

The Honorable Katherine Clark
U.S. House of Representatives
1415 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Sarbanes
U.S. House of Representatives
2444 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harold Rogers
U.S. House of Representatives
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
U.S. House of Representatives
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Clark, Rogers, Sarbanes, and Guthrie,

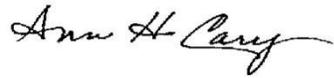
On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP), we would like to thank you for introducing the Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Act of 2018 (H.R. 5102). Our organizations help to collectively represent the expertise of education, practice, and research within the nursing profession. Within our memberships, there are over 500,000 nursing students (among them 87,000 nurse practitioner (NP) students), 47,000 faculty and over 85,000 NPs. Our organizations have made addressing the opioid epidemic a prime objective through education and awareness, and this legislation leverages an opportunity to continue the work of so many in this field.

In 2015, two million Americans suffered from substance use disorders related to taking opioids, and so far in 2018 more than 115 people died from overdosing on opioids every day.¹ The Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Act of 2018 is one solution to expand care for vulnerable regions struggling to retain an adequate number of healthcare professionals to care for those suffering from substance use disorder. Specifically, this legislation amends the Public Health Service Act to create a loan repayment program for individuals who hold a substance use disorder treatment position located in a health professional shortage area where the drug overdose death rate is higher than the national average. As part of this policy proposal, we applaud and appreciate the inclusion of the nursing student loans that are granted through the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs to be eligible for repayment. While the legislation gives the Secretary authority to add eligible practice sites we ask that NP practices be named in the legislation to ensure they too are eligible entities.

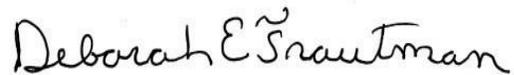
AACN and AANP commend the introduction of H.R. 5102, and appreciate your support and inclusion of America's nursing workforce in the fight against this epidemic. Our members are committed to providing cost-effective and quality care to rural and underserved regions that are struggling with access to this essential care. If we can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact AACN's Chief Policy Officer, Suzanne Miyamoto, at smiyamoto@aacnnursing.org or AANP's Vice President of Government Affairs, MaryAnne Sapio, at msapio@aanp.org.

¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). Opioid Overdose Crisis. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>.

Sincerely,



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