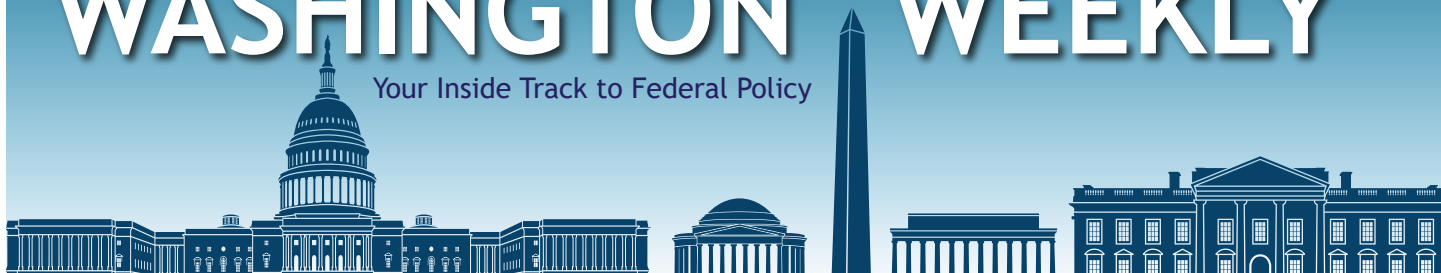


AACN's

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Your Inside Track to Federal Policy



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Honoring Black History Month: Spotlight on Nurses in Policy

AACN honors Betty Smith Williams, PhD, RN, FAAN, a trailblazer in nursing education whose long-standing leadership has promoted and advanced the achievements of African Americans within the profession. Dr. Williams was the first African-American graduate of the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, and soon after became the first African-American to hold a teaching position at a higher education institution in the state of California. Her dedication to higher education was further solidified when she became the Dean of the University of Colorado's School of Nursing. Dr. Williams was [quoted](#) in an article honoring her as distinguished alumni by Case Western Reserve as saying she *"saw very early on how activism and collectivism could impact change."* Activism and collectivism are the cornerstones of policy change, and Dr. Williams took this to heart in her career by helping to found the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) in 1971.

For over 45 years, NBNA has been a strong advocate for the health of vulnerable populations. Their members, not only participate in an annual Capitol Hill day, but also serve as experts to the White House, Congressional Black Caucus Health Brain Trust, and within the National Institutes of Health. Continuing on the path of collectivism, Dr. Williams also was a co-founder of the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations (NCEMA), which was established in 1998. NCEMA's mission is to advocate for equity and justice in health care. Dr. Williams's impact continues to be a driving force for change at the local, state, and national levels.

AACN Opposes Cuts to Health Care and Education in President's FY 2019 Budget

President Trump released the Administration's [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2019 budget proposal](#) on February 12, which made sweeping cuts to certain federal programs within the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. AACN is gravely concerned about the impact these cuts would have on America's progress in educating the health professions workforce to deliver evidence-based care, as this denotes an historic shift away from critical investments in the academic and healthcare infrastructure.

Targeted among the proposed widespread cuts were the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs, eliminating \$145 million, which translates to about 64%. Additionally, funding for the National Institute of Nursing Research was decreased by \$4 million, a nearly 3% cut. Although Congress ultimately decides the budget, AACN maintains that both Congress and the Administration should prioritize non-defense discretionary programs in order to ensure an educated and healthy nation. In [AACN's response to the budget proposal](#), Chair of the AACN Board of Directors Dr. Juliann Sebastian said, "Cuts of this magnitude do not align with academic nursing's mission to prepare a highly-educated nursing workforce."

In the meantime, the federal government is still operating under a [continuing resolution](#) until March 23, and lawmakers still need to pass a final FY 2018 solution. AACN [urges Congress](#) to reach a final FY 2018 bipartisan deal and invest in health care, research, and higher education. For details on proposed funding levels for AACN's programs of interest, see the [Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations chart](#) on our website.