



November 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer,

With communities across the country combating the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we prepare for the distribution and administration of a vaccine, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recognizes the essential role that nursing education plays in preparing our current and future healthcare providers. As the voice of academic nursing, AACN represents over 840 member schools of nursing at private and public universities. Our institutions educate more than 560,000 baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate students, and employ more than 50,000 faculty members who are scientists, educators, and practitioners. While AACN members continue to stand on the frontlines of this public health challenge, we recognize that additional work must be done.

As Congress continues negotiating the next COVID-19 package, FY 2021 appropriations, and potential supplemental funding, AACN strongly urges the inclusion of the following priorities:

- **Invest in Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs:** In addition to joining others within the community in supporting **at least \$269.972 million** for all **Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2021**, AACN strongly urges the inclusion of **additional supplemental funding to be allocated to all Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in the next COVID-19 stimulus package.** The Title VIII programs have consistently and continually built the supply and distribution of highly-educated nurses by strengthening nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study. Through grants, scholarships, and loan repayment programs, these vital federal investments positively impact the profession's ability to serve America's patients in all communities, especially those most in need, while also bolstering diversity within the workforce and increasing the number of nurses available during public health emergencies.
- **Include the Future Advancement of Academic Nursing (FAAN) Act (S. 4396/H.R.7945) in the next legislative relief package:** In considering previous proposals for COVID-19 relief packages, Congress has signaled that investment in healthcare education is imperative. AACN strongly encourages the next stimulus bill to recognize the vital role of nursing education by including the FAAN Act. The FAAN Act invests \$1 billion into schools of nursing to address immediate infrastructure support, which is critically important as our schools significantly expand their remote/distance learning capabilities and safety protocols, while outlining long-term emergency preparedness strategies. The voices of nursing deans, faculty, researchers, and students are an integral force in the ongoing efforts to address this pandemic, particularly in the development, distribution, and administration of a vaccine. The FAAN Act will assist in providing that foundational support in the current crisis and for the public health issues yet to come.

- **Support Increased Funding for Current and Future Nurse Scientists:** The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), as one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), continues to develop knowledge to build the scientific foundation for clinical practice to improve healthcare delivery across the entire lifespan. With NINR's work being as important as ever, in addition to at least \$177.976 million for NINR in FY 2021, we request additional supplemental funding for NINR and NIH during this pandemic. Through these investments, nurse scientists will continue to help translate today's research into tomorrow's cures.
- **Safeguard and Enhance Federal Student Loans and Aid for Nurses and Nursing Students:** Safeguarding federal student loans and aid so they remain uninterrupted is imperative. AACN also recognizes that additional aid to existing federal loan repayment and scholarship programs is necessary. One way to enhance these efforts is through the inclusion of the Strengthening America's Health Care Readiness Act (S. 4055), a bipartisan bill that would invest \$1 billion in the Nurse Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs and \$5 billion in the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), as well as create a National Health Service Corps Emergency Service demonstration project. These additional measures will ensure that healthcare providers continue to serve our rural and underserved communities, those especially impacted by the pandemic.
- **Guarantee the Safety and Health of Nurses and Nursing Students:** It is imperative that the safety of the public, nurses, and nursing students remains at the forefront of conversations surrounding COVID-19 relief legislation. We urge you to continue including funding to ensure that nursing educators and students are able to access personal protective equipment (PPE), have health worker protections, mental health resources, and institute other safety measures as they put their health at risk to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

AACN, our members, and our students remain committed to ensuring that our nation is healthy and strong throughout the duration of this unprecedented pandemic and stand ready to continue this work as a vaccine is developed and distributed. We commend Congress for your ongoing efforts and encourage you to include the above priorities, which will deeply benefit nursing education, practice, and patient care as we combat COVID-19 and future public health challenges. We look forward to working with you during this critical time. Should you have any questions, please contact Rachel Stevenson, AACN's Director of Government Affairs, at rstevenson@aacnnursing.org, or 202-463-6930 ext. 271.

Sincerely,



Susan Bakewell-Sachs, PhD, RN, FAAN
Board Chair



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

CC:
House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn
House Minority Whip Steve Scalise

Senate Majority Whip John Thune
Senate Minority Whip Richard Durbin
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Ranking Member, Patty Murray, Senate HELP Committee
Chairman Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee
Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee
Chairman Roy Blunt, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Ranking Member, Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
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Ranking Member, Greg Walden, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Chairwoman Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member, Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee
Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Ranking Member, Tom Cole, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies