



April 15, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-222, 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  
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,

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) commends Congress' swift passage of H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to help alleviate the health and economic impact of COVID-19 and to provide much needed support to nurse educators, faculty, students, and the workforce during these challenging times. As the national voice for academic nursing, representing more than 840 schools of nursing with 543,000 students and more than 45,000 faculty members, AACN is especially grateful to see the reauthorization of the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs included in H.R. 748. These programs provide vital resources to support nursing education pathways and nurses in all communities, especially rural and underserved areas.

While AACN members continue to combat this novel coronavirus, we recognize that additional work must be done to ensure the health and wellbeing of communities across the nation. As Congress considers additional ways to address COVID-19, we strongly urge the inclusion of the following priorities in any further legislative packages aimed at addressing this public health crisis:

- **Invest in Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs:** Each of the Title VIII programs fills a vital and unique role in addressing nursing education, workforce, and retention. Together, these programs provide foundational support, not only for those on the frontlines, but also those nurses who will be essential in future public health challenges. While AACN continues to request at least \$278 million for all Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2021, we also recognize how crucial these programs are to nurses, faculty, and nursing students today. Therefore, we request **not less than six months of supplemental funding, or at least \$130 million, be allocated to all Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs** including, Advanced Nursing Education; Nursing Workforce Diversity; Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention; Nurse Faculty Loan Program; and Nurse Corps Loan Repayment and Scholarship programs.
- **Provide Infrastructure Support for Nursing Education:** As nursing schools continue to prepare our future nursing workforce by transitioning to remote/distance learning, many programs have been forced to significantly expand their remote capabilities. This transition is especially challenging as our schools provide clinical experiences specific to nursing education and to a variety of individuals with remote technological and equipment needs.

These unplanned investments in distance learning, which include training faculty to teach using digital platforms, ensuring broadband capability and accessibility, supporting simulation and telehealth resources, and upgrading and purchasing new equipment, are essential to ensuring that nursing students continue their educational coursework remotely. We urge Congress to include investments in nursing education infrastructure in any COVID-19 legislation so that our nursing education pathways remain uninterrupted and strong.

- **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 these conversations. 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, and institute other safety measures as they put their health at risk to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Provide Technical Change to Nurse Corps Loan Repayment and Scholarship Tax Status:** Currently, the Nurse Corps loan repayment programs and scholarship awards, including tuition, fees, and the monthly stipend, are subject to federal taxes. These scholarships and loan repayments are only awarded to nurses and nursing students who complete a rigorous application process and commit to serving at least two years at a healthcare facility in a rural or underserved area with a critical shortage of nurses, or to serving as nurse faculty. Taxing these Nurse Corps programs imposes an unnecessary burden on students and nurses committed to working in rural and underserved areas and to serving our country's most vulnerable populations. We urge Congress to ensure that Nurse Corps benefits, similar to those provided in the National Health Service Corps, not be subject to federal taxes.

AACN, our members, and our students remain committed to ensuring that our nation is healthy and strong throughout the duration of this unprecedented public health challenge. We commend Congress for your ongoing efforts and encourage you to include the above priorities, which will deeply benefit nursing education and practice and patient care as we combat COVID-19. 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](mailto:rstevenson@aacnnursing.org), or 202-463-6930 ext. 271.

Sincerely,



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



Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN  
President and CEO

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

Chairman Charles Grassley, Senate Finance Committee  
Ranking Member, Ron Wyden, Senate Finance Committee  
Chairman Lamar Alexander, Senate HELP Committee  
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  
Chairman Richard Neal, House Ways & Means Committee  
Ranking Member, Kevin Brady, House Ways & Means Committee  
Chairman Frank Pallone, House Energy & Commerce Committee  
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