March 22, 2012

Honorable Jon Leibowitz
Chairman
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580

Dear Chairman Leibowitz:

On behalf of American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), I would like to express our appreciation for the Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) rulings on recent state legislation that involves the potential for anticompetitive behavior in the healthcare field. As the national voice of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, AACN represents over 690 schools of nursing that educate over 360,000 students and employ more than 16,000 faculty members. Our institutions support the FTC’s efforts to ensure patients have equal access to high-quality and cost-effective care provided by all practitioners including, Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs).

As you know, the 2010 landmark Institute of Medicine report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, calls for the FTC to “review existing and proposed state regulations concerning advanced practice registered nurses to identify those that have anticompetitive effects without contributing to the health and safety of the public.” The recent rulings in the state of Texas and Florida are two such examples where the FTC called for the state legislatures to enact legislation that would expand access to care provided by APRNs. Given the current demands on our nation’s healthcare system, every effort must be made to remove unnecessary barriers that would deny patient access to the full range of services that APRNs are educated to provide.

AACN commends the FTC’s efforts to investigate these unfair trade practices in health care. For decades, the research has demonstrated that APRNs provide access to high-quality and cost-effective care, particularly to those in rural and underserved areas. Moreover, as the largest group of healthcare providers, RNs and APRNs have continually demonstrated the impact their care makes to increase access, reduce cost, and improve quality in America’s healthcare delivery system.

We applaud the FTC’s important work to investigate anticompetitive and unfair trade practices in healthcare. We encourage you to continue this work as it will impact the health and well-being of our nation. If AACN can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact AACN Director of Government Affairs, Dr. Suzanne Miyamoto, at smiyamoto@aacn.nche.edu, or (202) 463-6930, ext. 247.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Potempa, PhD, RN, FAAN
President

cc: FTC Commissioners J. Thomas Rosch, Edith Ramirez, and Julie Brill

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