

November 16, 2020

President-Elect Joseph Biden  
Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris  
c/o The Honorable Ted Kaufman  
Chair  
Presidential Transition Team  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris:

On behalf of the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing](#) (AACN), we congratulate you on your recent election and look forward to working with you as we address the current public health challenge and other pressing priorities impacting our nation. 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. As the U.S. continues to grapple with the startling realities of COVID-19, we recognize the foundational role that nursing education plays in preparing current and future frontline healthcare providers.

While AACN members continue to confront the novel coronavirus, additional work must be done to ensure the health and wellbeing of communities across the country. The voices of nursing deans, faculty, researchers, and students are essential in these conversations and decisions. We are an integral force in the ongoing efforts to address this pandemic, particularly in the development, distribution, and administration of a vaccine, as well as preparing for public health issues yet to come. We appreciate your leadership by making one of the first acts of the transition the establishment of a taskforce to address COVID-19.

**AACN urges you to recognize the wealth of knowledge and deep breadth of expertise in nursing education and research by including nursing educators as the COVID-19 taskforce expands its efforts and as future opportunities for nursing engagement arise.** AACN offers our resources and expertise as we stand ready to assist throughout this transition process, as well as during the Biden Administration, to ensure that academic nursing is at the table to help inform sound policy.

One way to continue to strengthen policy conversations and leverage the blend of higher education and health care knowledge that our members possess is to ensure nurse educators and students are integrated into the policy framework through federal committees, commissions, and boards. Since 2018, AACN is proud to convene the Ad Hoc Nomination Consortium, which collaborates with fellow nursing organizations to identify and nominate experts in the nursing field for membership on federal advisory committees. We look forward to continuing this work in the Biden Administration.

In an ever-changing federal landscape, [AACN's 2021-2022 Federal Policy Agenda](#) outlines principles and essential core values that guide our efforts to support sustainable, inclusive, and innovative policy. This includes:

#### **ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION**

Investing in schools of nursing is imperative to ensure nursing education pathways remain strong during current and future public health challenges. AACN supports policy that:

- Promotes affordability, accessibility, accountability, diversity, and transparency;
- Guarantees the safety, health, and well-being of nurses and nursing students;

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- Ensures seamless remote/distance learning by enhancing broadband capacity, capability, and accessibility;
- Provides infrastructure support to universities and colleges, schools of nursing, faculty, staff, and students during these unprecedented times;
- Removes barriers to higher education to ensure accessibility for students from racial, ethnic, and economically diverse backgrounds, including first generation students; and
- Safeguards federal student loans, scholarships, and aid, while looking at new federal resource opportunities and ways to enhance clinical training partnerships.

### **PURSuing TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH**

AACN recognizes that science and research is the foundation on which nursing practice is built and is essential to advancing evidence-based interventions, informing policy, and sustaining the health of the nation. We work closely with federal agencies to advance transformative research, including with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and more specifically, the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). As one of 27 NIH Institutes and Centers, NINR is at the epicenter of nursing research. At NINR, nurse scientists, often working collaboratively with other health professionals, are generating and translating new findings focused on cutting edge innovations and lifesaving discoveries. AACN supports policy that:

- Increases investments in various federal agency research efforts, NIH, NINR, nurse scientists, and nurse researchers;
- Bolsters programs that help prepare the nation's future nurse scientists; and
- Encourages research that investigates methods to improve public health, address social determinants of health, and reduce health disparities.

### **DEVELOPING A ROBUST WORKFORCE**

As we have seen in efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, a well-educated nursing workforce is essential to ensuring the safety and health of our nation. For over fifty years, Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et. seq]), have positively impacted the profession's ability to serve America's patients, while also bolstering diversity within the workforce and strengthening nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study. It is crucial to support programs like Title VIII, in order to meet the care demands of all communities, including rural and underserved areas, by nurses – the largest segment of the healthcare workforce. AACN supports policy that:

- Expands and bolsters Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs;
- Strengthens academic-practice partnerships;
- Ensures all programs encourage and support clinical preceptors for all healthcare education, including nursing; and
- Implements nursing workforce policies and funding streams that reflect emerging trends with a focus on growth and quality in the system.

### **REDEFINING MODELS OF CARE**

AACN believes that we must work to advance sustainable models of care and invest in networks of community-based centers, nurse-managed health clinics, and in the public health infrastructure to ensure attainable and equitable population-based care inside and outside hospital walls. AACN supports policy that:

- Incorporates nurses, faculty, and students into all public health responses;
- Values and includes current and future nurses in any vaccine distribution, delivery, and administration efforts; and
- Dedicates federal resources to health systems and providers to ensure that delivery structures adapt to emerging technological advances, and ultimately, to advance accessible and affordable health care.

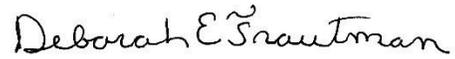
During these unprecedented times, the nursing workforce, schools of nursing, faculty, and

students are answering the call. AACN stands ready to serve as a resource and vital stakeholder to your Administration. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our expertise, analysis, and experience as you address health care, higher education, and related policy issues impacting our nation. If AACN can be of any assistance, please contact Dr. Colleen Leners, Director of Policy, at [cleners@aacnnursing.org](mailto:cleners@aacnnursing.org), and Rachel Stevenson, Director of Government Affairs, at [rstevenson@aacnnursing.org](mailto:rstevenson@aacnnursing.org). AACN enthusiastically looks forward to working with you throughout the transition and your Administration.

Sincerely,



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



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