2021-2022
Federal Policy Agenda
For Academic Nursing
AACN at a Glance

AACN stands ready to work with the 117th Congress and the Administration to achieve the following priorities essential to improving health and health care in our nation:

- Advance Higher Education
- Pursue Transformative Research
- Develop a Robust Workforce
- Redefine Models of Care

Core Policy Values

Underscored and threaded through these priority areas are three core policy values that AACN believes are central to the development of sound policy.

- Sustainable
- Inclusive
- Innovative

As the collective voice for academic nursing, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) serves as the catalyst for excellence and innovation in nursing education, research, and practice.

By the Numbers

- **850+** Nursing schools in all 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico
- **565,000+** Nursing students in baccalaureate and graduate programs
- **52,000+** Nursing faculty
Since 1969, AACN has fostered collaborative relationships with nursing, interprofessional, healthcare, and higher education communities, as well as, Congress and the Administration. Through these partnerships, AACN has helped advance policies that establish the critical role nurses play in delivering high quality, cost-effective, team-based health care.

AACN's member schools are preparing nursing students to be the profession’s leaders through a rigorous curriculum focused on clinical practice experiences representing the evolving structure of healthcare delivery.

While health care is at a crossroad, AACN's members are working to meet the demands of the population. The transition to value-base emphasizes prevention, quality, and patient-centered care coordination. This speaks to the expertise and education of registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses. Our deans, faculty, and students are ready to lead and be the change agents necessary for healthcare transformation.

Where are AACN’s Member Schools?
Advance Higher Education

SUSTAINABLE
Stabilize the immense financial impact that academic institutions and students face so they can continue to have a positive return on investment for a baccalaureate or graduate degree. Affordable higher education is not only critical for the success of the student, their family, and the community, but also for the economy and innovation. As the cost of learning rises, education budgets are being cut at all levels and academic institutions are asked to do more with less. Students, including AACN’s nursing students, are financing their degrees with federal and private loans and then facing mountains of debt upon graduation.

INCLUSIVE
Remove barriers to higher education to ensure accessibility for students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and economically diverse backgrounds. Holistic admissions processes must be funded and championed by schools nationwide. Exposure for individuals to career opportunities drives innovation, encourages collaboration, benefits the economy, and achieves the goal of an educated citizenry. This is a key priority within AACN’s strategic plan.

INNOVATIVE
Support rigorous accreditation that ensures high-quality and effective educational programs without creating unnecessary regulatory burden to allow students, academic institutions, and communities to flourish. Promoting excellence in colleges and universities enables them to be the nucleus in generating knowledge for the community.

Pursue Transformative Research

SUSTAINABLE
Expand the scientific workforce through sustained and increased funding for biomedical and behavioral research as well as training to yield an immeasurable return on investment. Scientific discoveries improve health, cure diseases, and translate to direct cost savings to the healthcare system, patient, and community. Research dollars are the lifeline for discovery, particularly for next generation investigators, and spur local economies.

INCLUSIVE
Encourage research that investigates methods to improve public health and reduce health disparities. Scalable data science that reflects diversity in the population will help to inform the way data is collected, analyzed, and translated, thus vastly improving the healthcare industry, as well as health on a local and global scale.

INNOVATIVE
Support both health care and health services research at the federal level to ensure that the systems that surround our care are strong—ultimately, impacting wellness. Quality and patient-centered care is driven by transformative research, yet must protect the safety of the patient. Placing patients, their families, and communities at the center of the research endeavor, is key to improving delivery of care.
Develop a Robust Workforce

**SUSTAINABLE**
Enhance federal investment in partnerships between the academic institution, faculty, and practice environments for a sustainable nursing workforce, while increasing support for faculty careers. Fostering academic-practice partnerships improves student learning, drives faculty and clinician engagement, and creates a unique environment that focuses on high-quality and cost-effective patient and family-centered care. Through these partnerships, nursing students are exposed to clinical sites where they will practice in the future.

**INCLUSIVE**
Invest in programs that support all students’ career paths and recruit individuals from diverse backgrounds to the nursing profession. Increasing diversity in the nursing profession to better match trends and shifts in national demographics will not only create lifelong career pathways, but just as critically, improve quality and population-centered care focused on individual person’s values and beliefs.

**INNOVATIVE**
Implement nursing workforce policies and funding streams that reflect emerging trends focused on growth and quality in the system. Delivering 21st century care that requires rapid examination and translation depends on the ability of the workforce to adapt to continually changing landscapes.

Redefine Models of Care

**SUSTAINABLE**
Advance sustainable models of care that lead to a healthier nation. As healthcare expenditures continue to rise, with more individuals having multiple health conditions, supporting patients to better manage their own health is a core tenant of nursing care.

**INCLUSIVE**
Invest in networks of community-based centers and in the public health infrastructure essential to ensuring attainable and equitable population-based care outside hospital walls. These family-centered healthcare delivery models, often led by nurses, address the patients’ desire to receive care in their communities.

**INNOVATIVE**
Dedicate 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. To make this model work, all providers must be valued for their contributions and allowed to practice to the full extent of their education and clinical training. Recognizing provider attestation ensures that team and value-based care is maximized.