



May 24, 2021

Andrea Palm  
Deputy Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Deputy Secretary Palm:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), we congratulate you on your confirmation as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. We applaud your previous work with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Obama Administration and welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff.

As you may know, nurses and nursing students are currently serving on the frontlines in the fight against COVID-19 by educating, tracing, testing, and vaccinating our communities. We at AACN have a vested interest in supporting this work, as our 840 member institutions are preparing over 580,000 nursing students to enter the workforce. Given the critical role nurses play in addressing public health emergencies and providing evidence-based care, we look forward to working with the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that nurses are engaged in the national dialogue on protecting the nation's health and improving health care.

As the collective voice for academic nursing, AACN serves as the catalyst for excellence and innovation in nursing education, research, and practice, especially in rural and underserved communities. Our 2021-2022 Federal Policy Agenda reflects our core policy values of sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity. We believe these principles are essential for strengthening and advancing our nation's health.

Please consider nursing professionals in your implementation of the American Rescue Plan. The field of nursing continues to provide strong, community-rooted, and cost-effective health care. We hope to work with you as we prepare the next generation of diverse, highly qualified nurses.

As you begin your work to set priorities and strengthen the healthcare workforce, please know that we are here to connect you with nursing leaders, researchers, and policy experts who offer critical insights. We welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss how we can assist in your work. If we can be of any assistance, please contact AACN by reaching out to Dr. Colleen Leners, Director of Policy, at [cleners@aacnnursing.org](mailto:cleners@aacnnursing.org), or Rachel Stevenson, Director of Government Affairs, at [rstevenson@aacnursing.org](mailto:rstevenson@aacnursing.org).

Sincerely,

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