



April 19, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs DeLauro and Murray and Ranking Members Cole and Blunt:

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) appreciates the Subcommittee's steadfast support of nursing education and research, especially as our nursing schools, faculty, and students remain dedicated to meeting the health needs of our nation. As you consider and advance the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS-ED) appropriations bill, AACN respectfully requests bold support for the nursing workforce by providing at least:

- **\$530 million for the Nursing Workforce Development Programs** (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et. seq]); and
- **\$210 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR).**

As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN represents more than 850 schools of nursing at public and private universities, who educate more than 565,000 students and employ more than 52,000 faculty. Collectively, these institutions graduate our nation's registered nurses (RN), advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), educators, researchers, scientists, and frontline providers. Our member schools are committed to preparing a highly educated nursing workforce and strengthening the foundation of nursing science, not only as we meet today's healthcare needs, but as we provide tomorrow's innovative and equitable healthcare solutions.

Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs

From the classrooms to the frontlines, we have witnessed how critical a well-educated nursing workforce is to providing high-quality healthcare. This need is only expected to grow, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2030 outlook for RN workforce demand projected an increase of 9%,

representing the need for an additional 276,800 jobs.¹ Demand for certain APRNs (nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse-midwives) is expected to grow even more, by 45%.²

While AACN saw student enrollment in entry-level baccalaureate nursing programs increase by 3.3% in 2021, the increase was 2.3% lower than 2020.³ Further, nursing schools saw enrollment decline in baccalaureate degree-completion programs and some graduate programs at the master's and PhD levels.⁴ For the first time since 2001, enrollment in master's programs decreased by 3.8%, which translates to 5,766 fewer students enrolled in 2021 than in the previous year.⁵ This is concerning, as these are the programs that help prepare individuals for a variety of roles in administration, teaching, research, informatics, and direct patient care. There were bright spots in 2021, with enrollments in Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs up 4.0%.⁶ However, the fact remains that a total of 91,938 qualified applications (not applicants) were not accepted at schools of nursing nationwide in 2021 alone.⁷ As our annual survey found, "the primary barriers to accepting all qualified students at nursing schools continues to be insufficient clinical placement sites, faculty, preceptors, and classroom space, as well as budget cuts."⁸

Educational pathways are just one piece of the puzzle. Strong and historic investments in the current nursing workforce are imperative, especially as we contend with an aging nursing workforce and the lasting impact COVID-19 has had on the profession. In fact, registered nurses age 65 and older already make up 19% of the workforce, and "more than one-fifth of all nurses reported they plan to retire from nursing over the next five years".⁹ Not to mention a recent study which found 52% of nurses considered leaving their position during the pandemic, up from 40% a year earlier.¹⁰ We must minimize the loss of experienced nurses who may prematurely leave the profession, and at the same time support nursing education to meet the current and future demand for nurses.

For over fifty years, Title VIII programs, comprising the largest dedicated federal funding source for nursing, have consistently and continually built the supply and distribution of highly educated nurses. These programs strengthen nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study. Through grants, scholarships, and loan repayment opportunities, these vital federal investments positively impact the profession's ability to serve America's patients across the country.

We recognize that each of these programs, from Advanced Nursing Education and Nursing Workforce Diversity to the Nurse Faculty Loan Program and Nurse Corps, have a unique and vital

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). Occupational Outlook Handbook- Registered Nurses. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). Occupational Outlook Handbook- Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm>

³ American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2022) Nursing Schools See Enrollment Increases in Entry-Level Programs, Signaling Strong Interest in Nursing Careers. Retrieved from: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/News-Information/Press-Releases/View/ArticleId/25183/Nursing-Schools-See-Enrollment-Increases-in-Entry-Level-Programs>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers (2021) The 2020 National Nursing Workforce Survey. Retrieved from: [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(21\)00027-2/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(21)00027-2/fulltext)

¹⁰ American Nurses Foundation. (2022). Pulse on the Nation's Nurses Survey Series: COVID-19 Two-Year Impact Assessment Survey. Retrieved from: <https://www.nursingworld.org/~492857/contentassets/872ebb13c63f44f6b11a1bd0c74907c9/covid-19-two-year-impact-assessment-written-report-final.pdf>

mission aimed at promoting nursing care throughout all communities, including those in vulnerable and underserved areas. By prioritizing funding for Title VIII, Congress can help bolster diversity within the profession, support our nursing students, ensure we have faculty to educate the future-nursing workforce, and increase the number of nurses prepared to serve in a variety of capacities, including at the forefront of public health emergencies. As we contend with the impact COVID-19, the aging workforce, and the needs of academic nursing to meet current and future demand, now is the time for historic support for existing Title VIII programs. Therefore, we request at least \$530 million for the Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2023.

National Institute of Nursing Research

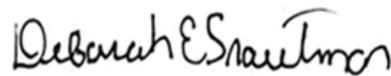
AACN recognizes that scientific research and discovery is the foundation on which nursing practice is built and is fundamental to advancing evidence-based interventions, informing policy, and sustaining the health of the nation. As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH, the NINR is integral to improving care and is on the cutting edge of new innovations that impact how nurses are educated and how they practice. In fact, 80% of research-focused educational training grants at schools of nursing are funded by NINR.¹¹ Through these grants and others, nurse scientists, often working collaboratively with other health professionals, are generating groundbreaking findings and leading translational research that works to address strategic imperatives, to include health equity, social determinants of health, population health, health promotion, and models of care. As such, we request at least \$210 million for NINR in FY 2023.

Enhanced support for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and NINR is essential to sustaining a strong nursing workforce able to care for our nation's population. AACN appreciates the Subcommittee's consideration of these FY 2023 requests and looks forward to working with you as we continue to strengthen academic nursing and the nursing workforce. If AACN can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact AACN's Director of Government Affairs, Rachel Stevenson, at (202) 463-6930, ext. 271 or rstevenson@aacnnursing.org.

Sincerely,



Cynthia McCurren, PhD, RN
Board Chair



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

CC:

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Representative Lois Frankel
Representative Cheri Bustos

¹¹ Schnall, R. (2019) National Institute of Health (NIH) funding patterns in Schools of Nursing: Who is funding nursing science research and who is conducting research at Schools of Nursing? *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 36(1), 34-41.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S8755722319301164?via=ihub#>

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