



August 18, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-222, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer,

On behalf of the 58 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), we would like to thank you for Congress' continued efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it has on our communities and patients. The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession representing nurses (RNs), advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs),<sup>1</sup> nurse leaders, students, faculty, and researchers who have been on the frontlines during this public health crisis. As you consider any COVID-19 legislative packages, we urge you to incorporate the below shared priorities, including:

- **Protect and Support Nurses and APRNs on the Frontlines:** As we continue to address the safety and well-being of our frontline healthcare workforce, including nurses, it is essential that we not only ensure an adequate supply of PPE, but that we also compensate and support essential workers for their services. We urge you to:
  - Create a dedicated funding stream that invests in nurses combatting COVID-19;
  - Provide resources to support our nurses' mental health needs for those responding to this pandemic;
  - Institute safety measures for the current and future nursing workforce;
  - Include funding to ensure child care coverage is available for individuals that need it, including our nurses.
- **Increase Funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs:** All Title VIII programs are essential to meeting the current COVID-19 challenge and preparing future nursing workforce for the next health care emergency. Title VIII programs help to ensure

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<sup>1</sup> APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

the health and well being of all communities, especially in rural and underserved areas. Additional supplemental funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs, especially given these unprecedented times, is imperative.

- **Support Nursing Education Infrastructure:** As higher education institutions continue to combat the realities of COVID-19 and as students begin the fall semester, nursing education remains a top priority. It is essential that federal investments are made to support nursing students and faculty so the education pathway remains strong and nurses can continue to be on the frontlines of current and future public health challenges.
- **Strengthen Investments in Public Health:** Since 2008, the local public health departments alone have lost more than 55,000 public health jobs, which include nurses.<sup>2</sup> This drastic shortage of public health professionals has been brought into stark relief during the current crisis. We must not only provide an immediate injection of funding to bolster the public health nursing workforce, but long-term investments in a national public health service pipeline of nurses and other health care professionals.
- **Invest in Nursing Research:** The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) provides critical support to nurse scientists and is foundational to evidence-based nursing care. We ask that any future legislation include additional funding to support the National Institutes of Health and NINR.
- **Promote Access to Telehealth:** Increased flexibility in telehealth access has been an essential component of providing care on the frontlines and will continue to be integral to clinicians after this public health emergency. We encourage any future legislation to include telehealth provisions that:
  - Address geographic limitations and remove originating site restrictions so that patients can receive telehealth in their homes;
  - Remove the limitation on the number of telehealth services Medicare providers can deliver;
  - Increase coverage and reimbursement for audio-only telehealth services; and
  - Expand telehealth to previously uncovered services and visits when the clinician determines that it is clinically appropriate.

We urge Congress to include these shared priorities in any COVID-19 legislative packages. Supporting nursing education, research, and the workforce is imperative to the health of our nation now and into the future. If the Nursing Community Coalition can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact the coalition’s Executive Director, Rachel Stevenson, at [rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org](mailto:rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org) or at 202-463-6930, ext. 271.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses  
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing  
American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners  
Academy of Neonatal Nursing  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

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<sup>2</sup> National Association of County & City Health Officials. “The Forces of Change in America’s Local Public Health System: 2018. <http://nacchoprofilestudy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-Forces-ofChange-Main-Report.pdf>

American Association of Heart Failure Nurses  
American Association of Neuroscience Nurses  
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists  
American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
American Association of Post-Acute Care Nursing  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American Nephrology Nurses Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Nursing Informatics Association  
American Organization for Nursing Leadership  
American Public Health Association, Public Health Nursing Section  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Society for Pain Management Nursing  
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses  
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing  
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses  
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses  
Association of Public Health Nurses  
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses  
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Incorporated  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service  
Dermatology Nurses' Association  
Emergency Nurses Association  
Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association  
Infusion Nurses Society  
International Association of Forensic Nurses  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists  
National Association of Hispanic Nurses  
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Neonatal Nurses  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Council of State Boards of Nursing  
National League for Nursing  
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium  
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties  
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing  
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association  
Society of Pediatric Nurses  
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates  
Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society

CC:

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer

House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise

Senate Majority Whip John Thune

Senate Minority Whip Richard Durbin

Chairman Lamar Alexander, Senate HELP Committee

Ranking Member, Patty Murray, Senate HELP Committee

Chairman Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee

Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee

Chairman Roy Blunt, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Ranking Member, Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Chairman Frank Pallone, House Energy & Commerce Committee

Ranking Member, Greg Walden, House Energy & Commerce Committee

Chairwoman Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee

Ranking Member, Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee

Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Ranking Member, Tom Cole, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies