



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),¹ 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

¹ 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.² 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 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

² 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