

March 19, 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,

As Congress considers steps to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) urges you to consider the safety of our nation's nurse educators and nursing students along with the sustainability of our nursing programs during this public health challenge. AACN is the national voice for academic nursing and represents more than 840 schools of nursing with 543,000 students and more than 45,000 faculty members. Our members are leaders in their communities and are committed to ensuring that our citizens remain healthy as we address COVID-19.

Through that lens, we urge Congress to include the below priorities in any COVID-19 legislation:

- **Reauthorize Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs:** As a top request of AACN, we urge Congress to include the bipartisan and widely supported Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act of 2019 (H.R. 728/S. 1399). Title VIII Reauthorization is essential to ensuring a robust nursing pipeline and is an indispensable component of fighting public health threats. This bipartisan legislation has unanimously passed the House of Representatives and advanced out of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee this Congress. These programs are crucial to nursing schools across the nation as they educate and prepare nurses today and in the future.
- **Increase Funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR):** As we confront this unprecedented public health challenge, it is essential that we increase funding for Title VIII programs and NINR. These programs are foundational to nursing education and research and provide the evidence-based tools needed to combat any healthcare challenge.
- **Guarantee the Safety and Health of Nurses and Nursing Students:** It is imperative that the safety of the public, nurses, and nursing students are at the forefront of these conversations. We urge you to include funding to ensure that nursing educators and students are able to access personal protective equipment (PPE) and durable medical equipment as they put their health at risk to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Safeguard Federal Student Loans and Aid:** As this public health challenge continues and schools across the nation are forced to transition to remote learning, we urge you to safeguard federal student loans and aid so they remain uninterrupted.

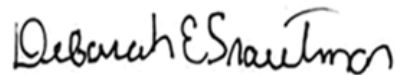
- **Ensure Strong Broadband Capacity, Capability, and Accessibility:** As we transition to remote learning, broadband access is essential for students and faculty. It is imperative that broadband capacity and capability is enhanced and accessibility of this technology is expanded to all areas, including rural and underserved communities, so our nursing students can continue their education coursework.

AACN, our members, and our students, remain committed to ensuring that our nation remains healthy and strong through the duration of this unprecedented public health challenge. We urge Congress to include the above priorities to address the growing needs of the communities we serve. We look forward to working with you during this critical time. Should you have any questions, please contact Rachel Stevenson, AACN's Director of Government Affairs, at rstevenson@aacnnursing.org, or 202-463-6930 ext. 271.

Sincerely,



Ann Cary, PhD, MPH, RN, FNAP, FAAN
Board Chair



Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and CEO

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 Charles Grassley, Senate Finance Committee
Ranking Member, Ron Wyden, Senate Finance Committee
Chairman Lamar Alexander, Senate HELP Committee
Ranking Member, Patty Murray, Senate HELP Committee
Chairman Richard Neal, House Ways & Means Committee
Ranking Member, Kevin Brady, House Ways & Means Committee
Chairman Frank Pallone, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Ranking Member, Greg Walden, House Energy & Commerce Committee