



December 5, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
United States House of Representative
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
United States House of Representative
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Granger:

As you continue to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS-ED) appropriations bill, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) respectfully requests your continued support for nursing education and the nursing workforce through:

- **At least \$259.472 million, or up to \$279.472 million, for existing Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs**, which is in line with the House-passed LHHS-ED appropriation bill, and
- **At least \$42.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)**, including funds provided to NIH through the 21st Century Cures Act [P.L. No: 114-255] for targeted initiatives. Within this overall funding level, **AACN also requests \$172.417 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)**, which is consistent with the Senate proposed LHHS-ED appropriations bill.

As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN represents 825 schools of nursing that educate more than 500,000 students and employ more than 45,000 faculty. Collectively, these institutions graduate our nation's registered nurses (RN), advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), faculty, and researchers. Our members are committed to preparing a highly educated nursing workforce and strengthening the foundation of nursing science.

Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs

One way we can continue to support nursing education is through increased federal investment in Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs. For over fifty years, these programs have consistently and continually built the supply and distribution of highly educated nurses by bolstering nursing education at all levels, from entry preparation through graduate study. Through grants, scholarships, and loan repayments programs, these crucial programs positively impact the profession's ability to serve America's patients in all communities, while also supporting diversity within the workforce and increasing the number of nurses trained to serve our aging population.

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING

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One such program under Title VIII that is vital to the future of the profession is the Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP). In Academic Year 2017-2018 alone, the NFLP awarded grants to 80 schools, supporting 2,172 nursing students pursuing a degree to become nurse faculty.¹ Among those 800 graduating trainees, 94% intend to teach nursing.²

One technical issue that we wish to flag, and seek correction, as you work on a final package, is qualifying language related to the Nurse Faculty Loan Program and the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). Specifically, in FY 2019, the final appropriation bill stated, “Provided further, That, *in addition to* amounts otherwise made available in the previous proviso, \$15,000,000 shall remain available until expended for the purposes of making payments under the NHSC Loan Repayment Program under section 338B of the PHS Act...”³

Contrary to Congressional intent, due to the “*in addition to*” phrasing, the HHS Secretary elected to “transfer” \$15 million from Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs, specifically the NFLP. As a result, this essential Title VIII program only received \$13.5 million in FY 2019, despite receiving a \$28.5 million appropriation. This unintended reduction to NFLP is deeply impactful to nursing students, future faculty, the nursing profession, and their communities. We therefore, respectfully request that the final bill utilize the corrected language included in the FY 2020 House-passed LHHS-ED bill, “Provided further, That, *within* the amount made available in the previous proviso, \$15,000,000 shall remain available until expended for the purposes of making payments under the NHSC Loan Repayment Program under section 338B of the PHS Act...”⁴ This correction will have a major impact on future nursing students, faculty, and workforce.

National Institute of Nursing Research and Public Health

As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at NIH, NINR is foundational to strengthening clinical practice and improving healthcare delivery across the entire lifespan. Nurse scientists, often working collaboratively with other health professionals, are generating and translating new findings focused on cutting edge innovations such as big data and data science, precision health, and genomics.⁵ Moreover, NINR allots a significant portion of its budget towards training new nursing scientists, thus helping to sustain the longevity and contributions of nursing research.⁶

As a supplement to these vital requests, and as we prepare the next generation of healthcare providers and scientists, we believe that conducting innovative public health research is foundational. To that end, we urge you to include the \$50 million appropriated in the House-passed LHHS-ED bill for the Centers for Disease Control and the NIH to study the public health emergency of gun violence. As with other recent public health emergencies, research has, and will, continue to provide the framework for creating timely and appropriate local, state, and national responses.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2020 Health Resources and Services Administration Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2020.pdf>.

² Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2020 Health Resources and Services Administration Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees. <https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/about/budget/budget-justification-fy2020.pdf>.

³ H.R.6157 - Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019, Public Law No: 115-245. Page 89. Retrieved from: <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ245/PLAW-115publ245.pdf>

⁴ H.R. 2740, Making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes. Page 44. Retrieved from:

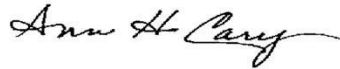
<https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/FY2020%20LHHS%20Filed%20Bill%20-%20HR2740.pdf>

⁵ Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). FY 2019 Budget. <https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/files/docs/NINR-Budget-FY-2020-508c.pdf>

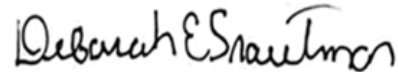
⁶ Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). FY 2019 Budget. <https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/files/docs/NINR-Budget-FY-2020-508c.pdf>

Supporting the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and NINR, as well as funding research on the gun violence epidemic, is essential to educating the future nursing workforce and ensuring we have the tools to provide the best care possible. AACN appreciates your consideration of our FY 2020 requests of at least **\$259.472 million, or up to \$279.472 million, for existing Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and \$172.417 million for NINR**. If we 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,



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



Deborah Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and CEO

CC:

Senator Roy Blunt
Senator Patty Murray
Representative Rosa DeLauro
Representative Tom Cole