



February 12, 2021

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027 USA

Dear Director Walensky:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), we congratulate you on your appointment as Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and welcome the opportunity to work with you and your staff.

As you know, nurses and nursing students are currently serving on the frontlines in the fight against COVID-19 by educating, tracing, testing, and vaccinating our communities. We at AACN have a vested interest in supporting this work, as our 840 member institutions are preparing over 560,000 nursing students to enter the workforce. Given the critical role nurses play in addressing public health emergencies and providing evidence-based care, we look forward to working with the CDC to ensure that nurses are engaged in the national dialogue on protecting the nation's health and improving health care.

As the collective voice for academic nursing, AACN serves as the catalyst for excellence and innovation in nursing education, research, and practice, especially in rural and underserved communities. Our 2021-2022 Federal Policy Agenda reflects our core policy values of sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity. We believe these principles are essential for strengthening and advancing our nation's health.

We are excited to see that the CDC has announced plans to coordinate the federal COVID-19 vaccination effort during a forum later this month. In alignment with this effort, more than 300 schools of nursing have pledged to engage faculty and students in the national vaccination campaign. Currently our academic institutions have vaccinated more than 150,000 individuals nationwide, and AACN is taking steps to increase these numbers by reaching out to more nursing schools and stakeholders to amplify this effort.

AACN is committed to working with the Biden-Harris Administration to prepare the next generation of a diverse, high-quality, and community-focused nursing workforce. Toward this effort, we can connect you with nursing leaders, researchers, and policy experts who can offer critical insights as you take the helm of CDC. We welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss how we can assist in your efforts. If we can be of any assistance, please contact AACN by reaching out to Dr. Colleen Leners, Director of Policy at cleners@aacnnursing.org, or Rachel Stevenson, Director of Government Affairs at rstevenson@aacnursing.org.

Sincerely,

Susan Bakewell-Sachs, PhD, RN, FAAN
Board Chair

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

ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING