



January 21, 2021

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing](#) (AACN), we congratulate you on your recent election and look forward to working with you and your staff in the 117th Congress to address the current public health challenge and other pressing legislative priorities essential to your constituents' and our nation's well-being. As the voice of academic nursing, AACN represents over 840 schools of nursing at private and public universities. Our institutions educate more than 560,000 baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate nursing students and employ more than 50,000 faculty members who serve as scientists, educators, and practitioners. AACN recognizes the foundational role that nursing education plays in preparing current and future frontline healthcare providers and works to bolster improvements in higher education, research, models of care, and clinical practice.

While AACN members continue to confront the novel coronavirus, additional work must be done. Nursing deans, faculty, researchers, and students are an integral force in the ongoing efforts to address this pandemic, particularly in the development, distribution, and administration of vaccines, as well as preparing for public health issues yet to come. As we have seen in efforts to combat COVID-19, a well-educated nursing workforce is essential. For over fifty years, Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et. seq]), have positively impacted the profession's ability to serve patients, while also bolstering diversity within the workforce and strengthening nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study. It is crucial to support programs like Title VIII, and other investments in nursing education, in order for nurses – the largest segment of the healthcare workforce – to meet the care demands of all communities, including rural and underserved areas.

Another top priority for AACN is funding for the National Institutes of Health, including the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). NINR is at the center of nursing research where nurse scientists, often working collaboratively with other health professionals, are generating and translating new findings focused on cutting edge innovations and lifesaving discoveries. AACN recognizes that science and research are the foundation on which nursing practice is built and essential to advancing evidence-based interventions, informing sound policy, and sustaining the health of the nation.

AACN is honored to convene the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), which consists of 63 national professional nursing organizations whose work has resulted in profound consensus on issues that aim to increase access to safe, high-quality care. We welcome your support this Congress and encourage you to consider joining the bipartisan-led Congressional Nursing Caucus as an opportunity to advance health care and higher education through the nursing lens.

During these unprecedented times, the nursing workforce, schools of nursing, faculty, and students are answering the call. AACN stands ready to serve as a resource and vital stakeholder to you and your staff. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our expertise, analysis, and experience as you address healthcare, higher education, and related legislative issues. If AACN can be of any assistance, or to set up a meeting to learn more about AACN and our efforts, please contact Rachel Stevenson, Director of Government Affairs, at Rstevenson@aacnursing.org. We look forward to working with you this Congress.

Sincerely,

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

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

THE VOICE OF ACADEMIC NURSING