



February 25, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the 59 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC) we urge you to include the below priorities as you continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing impact it has on our communities and patients nationwide. The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession representing Registered 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 we confront this pandemic and work to distribute and administer vaccines, we strongly request the following areas be included in the next COVID-19 relief package so our current and future nursing workforce may continue to respond to the public health challenge.

- **Protect and Support those on the Frontlines:** As we continue to address the safety and well-being of our frontline healthcare workforce, including nurses and APRNs, 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:
 - Provide resources to support our nurses, APRNs, and nursing students' mental health needs, especially for those responding to this pandemic;
 - Institute safety measures for the current and future nursing workforce;
 - Include funding to ensure childcare coverage is available for individuals that need it.
- **Support Nursing Education Infrastructure: Pass the Future Advancement of Academic Nursing (FAAN) Act (S.246/H.R.851):** As higher education institutions continue to combat the realities of COVID-19, nursing education remains a top priority. The FAAN

¹ APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

Act would support the needs of nursing students, help retain and hire diverse faculty, and provide resources to modernize nursing education infrastructure and create and expand clinical education opportunities. These efforts are essential and will help prepare nursing students as they transition from the classroom to the frontlines.

- **Include Nurses, APRNs, and Nursing Students in all National Public Health Plans:** 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. As Congress continues work on a COVID-19 package, it is imperative that we 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 infrastructure, which must include nursing students, nurses, APRNs, and other health care professionals.
- **Invest in Federal Programs that support Nursing Workforce and Nursing Research:** During these critical times, bold investments in longstanding and successful federal programs, such as Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), are essential. These programs have a proven track record, continue to help ensure the health and well being of all communities, and support nurse scientists whose research establishes the scientific basis for quality patient care. One way to continue support for existing federal programs is by including the bipartisan Strengthening America’s Health Care Readiness Act (S.54), which provides additional resources for the Nurse Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment programs and other programs that support nurses and APRNs who work in areas that need them the most.
- **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;
 - Expand telehealth to previously uncovered services and visits when the clinician determines that it is clinically appropriate;
 - Remove the recently passed provision requiring a prior in-person relationship between practitioner and patient before a Medicare patient can access mental health services via telehealth; and
 - Continue to allow state licensing boards and practitioners to determine the appropriate standards of care for patients.

We urge Congress to include these shared priorities in COVID-19 relief efforts. 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,

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>

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
Academy of Neonatal Nursing
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
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 Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association, Inc.
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 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 Black Nurses Association
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
Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society
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 Richard Durbin
Senate Minority Whip John Thune
Chair Patty Murray, Senate HELP Committee
Ranking Member Richard Burr, Senate HELP Committee
Chairman Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee
Vice Chairman Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee
Chair Patty Murray, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Ranking Member Roy Blunt, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Chairman Frank Pallone, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Ranking Member Cathy McMorris Rodgers, House Energy & Commerce Committee
Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro, 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