

October 28, 2015

Hon. John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Mrs. Pelosi:

On behalf of our member organizations representing some 340,000 Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) nationwide, we commend your work with the bipartisan Senate leadership and the Administration to yield a bipartisan budget agreement awaiting consideration in Congress shortly (HR 1314 as amended).

We strongly support the bipartisan resolution of top-line federal spending figures for FYs 2016 and 2017 that allow for orderly completion of appropriations legislation before the current continuing resolution expires on Dec. 11. The additional funding allows Congress to complete this work in a manner consistent with the priorities that APRN organizations have set forth, including funding for Title 8 nurse workforce development programs, the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ), and the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) within the National Institutes of Health. We also support Congress backing the full faith and credit of the United States by extending the federal debt limit through March 2017.

As strong supporters of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act adopted this past April, we are concerned that the package prolongs overall budget sequestration cuts through 2024, including sequestration cuts to Medicare programs. While the package also smooths the imposition of sequestration over its later years, we are disappointed that out-year Medicare payments are being tapped by extending sequestration cuts in order to obtain savings to spend in earlier years. We look forward to continuing to work with Congress and the Administration in support of predictable Medicare payment that supports comprehensive reforms Congress adopted with our groups' support just six months ago.

Noting that the Nov. 3 debt limit deadline limits congressional opportunities to amend this package, we also express concern that the bill's provisions limit Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) determinations solely to physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists (Sec. 832). The provision excludes APRNs from making such determinations even though this service is needed by their patients and lies within their scope of practice. The rest of the legislation is careful to extend provisions to physicians "and other health care providers," a term that includes APRNs, which we support. Consistent with the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine, legislation should recognize APRNs to the full scope of their preparation and skills, and authorize and cover all of their services in the same manner as physicians when they are delivering the same services as physicians consistent with their state scope of practice. We recommend that the legislation be amended to allow APRNs also to make SSDI eligibility determinations so that beneficiaries may obtain the services for which they are eligible, and

public interest against SSDI fraud and waste is maintained. If an amendment is not possible at this stage, we look forward to working with the Congress to correct this matter in the near future.

Thank you for your leadership on these critical matters. If you have any questions or follow-up, please contact Frank Purcell at the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, 202-484-8400, fpurcell@aanadc.com.

Sincerely,

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)

American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)

American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)

American Nurses Association (ANA)

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS)

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)

National League for Nursing (NLN)

National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF)