



**Testimony Regarding Fiscal Year 2017 Appropriations
for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs
April 14, 2016**

To: Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies,
Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate

Submitted by: Sharon Horner, PhD, RN, MC-CNS, FAAN
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Agency Addressed: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Program: Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs

Funding Request: \$244 million in FY 2017

The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) is the voice of more than 72,000 clinical nurse specialists (CNSs). CNSs are licensed advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) who have graduate preparation (master's or doctorate) in nursing as a clinical nurse specialist. They have unique and advanced level competencies that meet the increased needs of improving quality and reducing costs in today's healthcare system. CNSs provide direct patient care, including assessment, diagnosis, and management of patient healthcare issues. They are leaders of change in health organizations, developers of scientific evidence-based programs to prevent avoidable complications, and coaches of those with chronic diseases to prevent hospital readmissions. CNSs are facilitators of multidisciplinary teams in acute and chronic care facilities to improve the quality and safety of care, including preventing hospital acquired infections, reducing length of stays, and preventing hospital readmissions.

The NACNS urges the subcommittee to fund *the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs at \$244 million in FY 2017.*

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the registered nurse (RN) workforce will grow 16 percent from 2014 to 2024, outpacing the seven percent average for most other occupations. BLS also projects that this growth will result in 439,300 job openings, representing one of the largest numeric increases for all occupations.

In addition, employment of APRNs is projected to grow 31 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. Growth will occur because of an increase in the demand for healthcare services. Several factors will contribute to this demand, including a large number of newly insured patients resulting from healthcare legislation, an increased emphasis on preventive care, and the large, aging baby-boom population.

BLS notes that the healthcare sector is a critically important industrial complex for the nation. It is key to economic recovery with the number of jobs climbing steadily. Healthcare jobs are up nationwide, and BLS projects health-care occupations and industries to have the fastest employment growth and which will add the most jobs between 2014 and 2024. Over three million workers are in hospital settings, which often are the largest employer in a state. Healthcare has been a stimulus program generating employment and income, and nursing is the predominant occupation in the healthcare industry with more than 4.331 million active, licensed RNs in the United States in January 2016.

The Nursing Workforce Development Programs provide training for entry-level and advanced degree nurses to improve the access to, and quality of, healthcare in underserved areas. The Title VIII nursing education programs are fundamental to the infrastructure delivering quality, cost-effective healthcare. NACNS applauds the subcommittee's bipartisan efforts to recognize that a strong nursing workforce is essential to a health policy that provides high-value care for every dollar invested in capacity building for a 21st century nurse workforce.

The current federal funding falls short of the healthcare inequities facing our nation today. Absent consistent support, slight boosts to Title VIII will not fulfill the expectation of generating quality health outcomes, nor will episodic increases in funding fill the gap generated by a more than 15-year nurse and nurse faculty shortage felt throughout the U.S. health system.

NACNS believes that the deepening health inequities, inflated costs, and poor quality of healthcare outcomes in this country will not be reversed until the concurrent shortages of nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and qualified nurse educators are addressed. Your support will help ensure that future nurses exist who are prepared and qualified to take care of you, your family, and all those who will need our care. Without national efforts of some magnitude to match the healthcare reality facing the nation today, it will be difficult to avoid the adverse effects on the health of our nation from the inability of our under resourced nursing education programs to produce sufficient numbers of high quality RNs and APRNs.

In closing, NACNS urges the subcommittee to maintain the ***Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs by funding them at a level of \$244 million in FY 2017.***

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Similar testimony was filed in the House on April 14, 2016.