



**Testimony Regarding Fiscal Year 2015 Appropriations for
Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs
April 28, 2015**

Submitted by: Peggy Barksdale, MSN, RN, OCNS-C, CNS-BC, President, National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
To: Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies,
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
Agency Addressed: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) is the voice of more than 70,000 clinical nurse specialists (CNSs). CNSs are licensed registered nurses 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 2016.**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the registered nurse (RN) workforce will grow 19.4 percent from 2012 to 2022, outpacing the 11 percent average for most other occupations. BLS also projects that this growth will result in 1,052,600 job openings, representing one of the largest numeric increases for all occupations. With technological advancements driving growth in treatments, preventive care being emphasized more, expanding demand from new health reform enrollments, and accelerating demand from the two million Baby Boomers aging into Medicare every year, these are the factors fueling this projected increase in new RN jobs. A particularly alarming element of the probable RN job openings is the anticipated loss of nursing expertise due to the need to replace some 525,700 jobs vacated by RNs who are expected to leave the profession and/or retire from the labor force by 2022.

BLS notes that the healthcare sector is a critically important industrial complex for the nation. It is at the center of the economic recovery with the number of jobs climbing steadily. Growing even when the recession began in December 2007, healthcare jobs are up nationwide. Nearly five million workers are in hospital settings, which often are the largest employer in a state. Health care has been a stimulus program generating employment and income, and nursing is the predominant occupation in the healthcare industry with more than 4.265 million active, licensed RNs in the United States in 2015.

The Nursing Workforce Development Programs provide training for entry-level and advanced degree nurses to improve the access to, and quality of, health care in underserved areas. The Title VIII nursing education programs are fundamental to the infrastructure delivering quality, cost-effective health care. 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, an under resourced nurse education and its adverse effect in health care generally will be difficult to avoid.

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 2016.

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