



**Testimony Regarding Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations
for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs
April 27, 2018**

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

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Agency Addressed: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Program: Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development

Funding Request: \$266 million in FY 2019

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 health care system. CNSs provide direct patient care, including assessment, diagnosis, and management of patient health care 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 \$266 million in FY 2019.*

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the registered nurse (RN) workforce will grow 15 percent from 2016 to 2026, outpacing the seven percent average for all occupations in the U.S. economy. BLS also projects that this growth will result in 438,100 job openings, representing one of the largest numeric increases for occupations. Overall, job opportunities for nurses are expected to increase because of employment growth and the need to replace those who retire over the coming decade.

In addition, employment of APRNs is projected to grow 31 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. Growth will occur because of an increase in the demand for health care services, particularly in medically underserved areas such as rural areas

and inner cities. According to the BLS, “[s]everal factors will contribute to this demand, including the fact that APRNs can perform many of the same services as physicians . . . [and] APRNs are becoming more widely recognized by the public as a source for primary health care.” The Bureau also notes that as states change their laws to correct the current governing barriers to practice, APRNs’ ability to practice to the full extent of their education, training, and certification, will be attained.

APRNs increasingly will be used in team-based models of care where they will provide preventive and primary care. APRNs also will be leading the care for the large, aging baby-boom population, which likely will experience ailments and complex conditions. Their advanced practice nursing care expertise will be tapped to keep these patients healthy and to treat those who have chronic and acute conditions.

BLS states that the health care sector is a critically important industrial complex for the nation. It is key to economic recovery and development with the number of jobs climbing steadily, and projected to add more jobs than any of the other occupational groups. BLS estimates that health care occupations will grow 18 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations, adding about 2.4 million new jobs. Over three million workers are in hospital settings, which often are the largest employer in a state. Even through the Great Recession, health care has been a stimulus program generating employment and income, and nursing is the predominant occupation in the health care industry with more than 4.6 million active, licensed RNs in the United States in April 2018.

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. NACNS contends that it is critically important that Title VIII programs continue to have individual line items that include:

- Advanced Nursing Education (Sec. 811), which contains the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeships and Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships
- Nursing Workforce Diversity (Sec. 821)
- Nurse Education, Practice, Quality, and Retention (Sec. 831)
- NURSE Corps Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs (Sec. 846)
- Nurse Faculty Loan Program (Sec. 846A)
- Comprehensive Geriatric Education (Sec. 855)

The current federal funding falls short of the health care inequities facing our nation today. Absent consistent support, 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 nurse faculty shortage felt throughout the U.S. health system.

NACNS believes that health inequities, inflated costs, and poor quality of health care outcomes in regions of this country will not be reversed until concurrent shortages of RNs, APRNs, 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 health care 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 \$266 million in FY 2019.***

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Similar testimony was filed with the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies on April 24, 2018.