



April 11, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Health, Labor, Education & Pensions Committee
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander,

On behalf of the 40 undersigned organizations, the Nursing Community Coalition offers the following comments in response to the draft legislation, *The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018*. The members of the Nursing Community Coalition are the cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession. With over four million licensed registered nurses, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), and nursing students, the profession embodies the drive and passion to continually improve care for patients, families, and communities. The coalition is committed to improving the health of our nation, and we applaud the committee for continuing to take policy measures that will help curb the opioid epidemic. Our comments specifically refer to reducing practice limitations on the country's 381,000 APRNs (including 248,000 nurse practitioners, 70,000 clinical nurse specialists, 52,000 certified registered nurse anesthetists, and 11,000 certified nurse-midwives) which would increase access to care.¹

The coalition has previously supported the Addiction Treatment Access Improvement Act (H.R. 3692/S. 2317) which expands the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 823 (g)(2)(G)) and would allow all APRNs to provide Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). Additionally, the coalition supports a similar provision in the newly introduced CARA 2.0 Act of 2018. Section 7.0 of CARA 2.0 expands the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-198) to allow all APRNs to prescribe MAT. Both of these pieces of legislation would create a permanent solution so that the country's APRNs would be able to use their clinical training to help combat this national crisis.

The coalition urges the Committee to use provider-neutral language and incorporate all APRN roles in *The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018*, as specified above, as a way to expand access to care for patients suffering from opioid addictions. Opioid use and dependence are growing public health threats, despite the many actions put in place to try to end this crisis. Every day, approximately 115 people die from opioid overdose²; APRNs are critical agents in treating these patients and are sometimes the sole providers of this care in regions that struggle to recruit and retain providers.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments on the draft of *The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018*. If the Nursing Community Coalition can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not

¹ National Council of State Boards of Nursing. *The Consensus Model for APRN Regulation, Licensure, Accreditation, Certification, and Education*. Retrieved from <https://nscbn.org/aprn-consensus.htm>.

² National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). *Opioid Overdose Crisis*. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>.

hesitate to contact the coalition's Executive Director, Dr. Suzanne Miyamoto, at smiyamoto@aacnnursing.org or 202-463-6930, ext. 247.

Sincerely,

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 College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Nursing Informatics Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nurses
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Public Health Nurses
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
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 Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Black Nurses Association
National Council of State Boards of Nursing
National League for Nursing
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Society of Pediatric Nurses
Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society

Cc: The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Michael Enzi
The Honorable Bernie Sanders
The Honorable Richard Burr
The Honorable Robert Casey Jr.
The Honorable Johnny Isakson
The Honorable Michael Bennet
The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
The Honorable Susan Collins
The Honorable Christopher Murphy
The Honorable Bill Cassidy
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Todd Young
The Honorable Tim Kaine
The Honorable Orrin Hatch
The Honorable Maggie Hassan
The Honorable Pat Roberts
The Honorable Tina Smith
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
The Honorable Doug Jones
The Honorable Tim Scott