April 28, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Shelby:

On behalf of the 3.1 million nurses who serve as the backbone of our nation's healthcare system, the 40 undersigned organizations of the Nursing Community are writing to respectfully request your support for increased funding in fiscal year (FY) 2012 for the Nursing Workforce Development programs authorized under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.) and the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), as well as to secure authorized funding for Nurse-Managed Health Clinics (NMHCs) under Title III of the Public Health Service Act. Specifically, we urge you to provide $313.075 million for the Nursing Workforce Development programs, $163 million for NINR, and $20 million for the Title III NMHC grants.

As you know, ensuring all Americans receive quality health care and that our nation has the health professionals necessary to meet the current acute and primary care demands will require a robust workforce of Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). Investment in the Nursing Workforce Development programs, administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), supported the recruitment, education, and retention of more than 347,000 nurses and nursing students as well as numerous academic nursing institutions and healthcare facilities between FY 2006 and FY 2009. However, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a demand on our delivery system that will necessitate the creation of 581,000 new positions by 2018, a 22% increase in the nursing workforce. APRNs and RNs rely upon support through Title VIII to complete their degrees and offset their considerable educational expenses. The Nursing Workforce Development programs are tailored specifically to addressing workforce demands, but will require enhanced funding to adequately meet the needs of our nation.

Research-based initiatives that improve acute care outcomes and promote preventative health awareness hold the key to reducing health care spending and promoting sustainable practices, which are at the heart of nursing science. NINR's research goals of promoting health, preventing disease, eliminating health disparities, and improving quality of life over the last 25 years has made a lasting impact on the lives of millions of Americans. Often working collaboratively with physicians and other researchers, nurse scientists are vital in setting the national research agenda. Improving the investment in nursing science through NINR will help promote advances in our nation's healthcare system.

Finally, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* [Public Law 111-148] amended Sec. 330 of the Public Health Service Act to provide grant eligibility to Nurse-Managed Health Clinics (NMHCs) to support operating costs. NMHCs are managed by APRNs, and provide primary care or wellness services to underserved or vulnerable populations and are associated with a school, college, university or department of nursing, federally qualified health center, or independent nonprofit health or social services agency. The care provided in these sites directly contributes to positive health outcomes and savings in the long term. In one US city alone, nurses at an NMHC see their patients almost twice as frequently as other providers, and their patients are hospitalized 30% less and use the emergency room 15% less often than those of other healthcare providers. Providing funding for these clinics is a direct investment in the specific health needs of localized communities.

Please know that the undersigned organizations understand and appreciate that the Congress has limited resources. However, without an adequate supply of nurses, the science to support their work, and the safety net services they provide, the nation's health care system is not sustainable. We thank you in advance for your support of our FY 2012 requests of $313.075 million for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs, $163 million for NINR, and $20 million for Nurse-Managed Health Clinics. Please consider our organizations available as resources to you and your colleagues on the national nursing issues facing the nation's patients.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Assembly for Men in Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American Holistic Nurses Association
American Nephrology Nurses' Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
International Nurses Society on Addictions
International Society of Psychiatric Nursing

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Black Nurses Association
National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Public Health Nursing Section, American Public Health Association
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society

Cc:
Senator Daniel Inouye
Senator Herb Kohl
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Mary Landrieu
Senator Richard Durbin
Senator Jack Reed
Senator Mark Pryor
Senator Barbara Mikulski
Senator Sherrod Brown
Senator Thad Cochran
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Senator Lamar Alexander
Senator Ron Johnson
Senator Mark Kirk
Senator Lindsey Graham
Senator Jerry Moran