

February 27, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chair
Appropriations Committee
S-131 U.S Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid, Inouye, Harkin, and Specter:

On behalf of the undersigned nursing organizations, we would like to offer our sincere appreciation for your work to champion nursing education in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The dollars invested in the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs will quickly help fill the many vacant nursing jobs across the country.

As you are well aware, the Title VIII programs have been the largest source of federal funding for nursing education over the last 45 years. These programs have supported the education and careers of thousands of future nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and nurse faculty. However, Title VIII funding has remained stagnant and has not kept pace with inflation or rising educational costs in recent years. Therefore, the community was thrilled to see that President Obama and Congress believed that making an investment in these programs was essential to filling over 140,000 vacant nursing positions nationwide. Nursing funding will impact all sectors of the healthcare industry including the acute care setting, home healthcare, nursing homes, health departments, community health centers, and the nursing services provided in our nation's schools and workplaces, only to name a few.

We believe this is a solid investment at a time when millions of Americans are unemployed and well-paid registered nursing jobs are going unfilled. Nursing positions are in great demand as there is currently an 8.1% vacancy rate across the country, according to American Hospital Association. Funding for nurse training will meaningfully contribute to the reduction of these vacancies and the unemployment rate.

Thank you again for your considerable efforts to include nursing education in the final stimulus package. On behalf of the nursing community, representing the largest population of the healthcare workforce, we are grateful to be supported by true nursing champions.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators
American Association of Nurse Executives
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Public Health Association, Public Health Nursing Section
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of State and Territorial Nursing Directors
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council of State Boards of Nursing
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Facilities
National Student Nurses' Association
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Visiting Nurse Associations of America

cc:

Senator Herbert Kohl
Senator Patty Murray
Senator Mary Landrieu
Senator Richard Durbin
Senator Jack Reed
Senator Frank Lautenberg