



May 6, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
House Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jeffries,

As we celebrate National Nurses Week, May 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 64 members of the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC) urge Congress to support our current and future nurses, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs),<sup>1</sup> nurse leaders, boards of nursing, faculty, and scientists. The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession. As the largest segment of the health care profession,<sup>2</sup> nursing is involved at every point of care, including rural, urban, and underserved areas, is at the frontlines of public health challenges, and is leading the way to ensure today's science translates to tomorrow's cures. Our nurses are working in community health centers, hospitals, long-term care facilities, local and state health departments, schools, workplaces, and patients' homes.

As Congress looks to support our nation's nursing workforce, during National Nurses Week and beyond, the NCC expresses our strong support for the consideration and passage of the following legislative priorities that directly impact nursing education, workforce, and research, including:

- **Support at least \$530 Million for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2025.**
- **Support at least \$210 Million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) in FY 2025.**
- **Invest in Nursing Education: Support our Nursing Schools, Faculty and Students.**
- **Support the Nursing Workforce: Ensure Patients have Access to the High-Quality Care Provided by our Nation's APRNs.**
- **Institute Safety Measures for the Current and Future Nursing Workforce.**
- **Invest in Maternal Health Today for a Healthier Tomorrow.**

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<sup>1</sup> APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2021) Who are our Health Care Workers? Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/04/who-are-our-health-care-workers.html>

- **Support the Mental Health and Healthy Working Environments for Nurses.**
- **Invest in our Public Health Infrastructure.**

### **Understanding the Landscape: The Current Realities Impacting our Nursing Workforce**

We all have witnessed the immense impact public health challenges have had on our health care workforce. Nurses continue to feel that impact. In fact, a recent American Nurses Foundation’s study found that 19% of nurses said they intend to leave their position in the next six months, and 27% are considering leaving.<sup>3</sup> Most recently, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) unveiled their research, “Examining the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Burnout & Stress Among U.S. Nurses,” which found that approximately 100,000 RNs left the workforce during the pandemic and another 610,388 RNs report an “intent to leave” by 2027 due to stress, burnout, and retirement.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the most recent nursing workforce study underscored that “more than one-quarter of all nurses report that they plan to leave nursing or retire over the next 5 years.”<sup>5</sup> We have also seen a decrease in the median age of a nurse, going from 52 in 2020 to 46 in 2022.<sup>6</sup> As NCSBN points out, “this decline was associated with estimated losses to the workforce of at least 200,000 experienced RNs.”<sup>7</sup>

National data supports this need to invest in our nursing workforce, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projecting that by 2032 demand for RNs would increase 6%, illustrating an employment change of 177,400 nurses.<sup>8</sup> Further, the demand for most APRNs is expected to grow by 38%.<sup>9</sup> Given these realities, many look to education to ensure the nursing pipeline remains strong. However, AACN’s most recent annual survey found that, “the primary barriers to accepting all qualified students at nursing schools continue to be insufficient clinical placement sites, faculty, preceptors, and classroom space, as well as budget cuts.”<sup>10</sup>

We agree that bold, innovative, and impactful solutions are needed. The NCC supports the following priorities, as now is the time for historic investment in our current and future nursing workforce.

### **A Path Forward: Top Legislative Priorities to Address the Needs of Our Current and Future Nursing Workforce**

- **Support at least \$530 Million for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in FY 2025:** As the largest dedicated funding for our current and future nurses, existing

<sup>3</sup> American Nurses Foundation. (2023). Three-Year Annual Assessment Survey: Nurses Needed Increased Support from their Employer. Retrieved from: [https://www.nursingworld.org/~48fb88/contentassets/23d4f79cea6b4f67ae24714de11783e9/anf-impact-assessment-third-year\\_v5.pdf](https://www.nursingworld.org/~48fb88/contentassets/23d4f79cea6b4f67ae24714de11783e9/anf-impact-assessment-third-year_v5.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2023) Examining the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Burnout & Stress Among U.S. Nurses. Retrieved from: National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2023) Examining the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Burnout & Stress Among U.S. Nurses. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncsbn.org/news/ncsbn-research-projects-significant-nursing-workforce-shortages-and-crisis> and [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(23\)00063-7/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(23)00063-7/fulltext)

<sup>5</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers (2023) The 2022 National Nursing Workforce Survey. Retrieved from: [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(23\)00047-9/pdf](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(23)00047-9/pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Occupational Outlook Handbook- Registered Nurses. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/registered-nurses.htm>

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Occupational Outlook Handbook- Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, and Nurse Practitioners. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/nurse-anesthetists-nurse-midwives-and-nurse-practitioners.htm>

<sup>10</sup> American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2024) New AACN Data Points to Enrollment Challenges Facing U.S. Schools of Nursing. Retrieved from: <https://www.aacnursing.org/news-data/all-news/article/new-aacn-data-points-to-enrollment-challenges-facing-us-schools-of-nursing>

Title VIII programs have a proven track record of helping bolster and sustain the nation's diverse nursing pipeline by addressing all aspects of nursing workforce demand. With an aging population, and need to support our frontline providers, funding for Title VIII must meet levels reflecting the nursing population it serves.

- **Support at least \$210 Million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) in FY 2025:** As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at the National Institutes of Health, NINR's research is aimed at reducing the impact of social determinants of health and creating a more equitable health care system by promoting patient-centered care across the life continuum. The translational research by our nation's nurse scientists is essential to developing new evidence-based practices to care for all patients.
- **Invest in Nursing Education: Support our Nursing Schools, Faculty and Students:** To ensure a robust and diverse nursing workforce, investing in the education pathways of our future RNs and APRNs is imperative. The NCC urges Congress to consider and pass **the Future Advancement of Academic Nursing (FAAN) Act (H.R.7266/S.3770)**. The FAAN Act would provide those vital resources to support the needs of nursing students, help retain and hire diverse faculty, modernize nursing education infrastructure, and create and expand clinical education opportunities. In addition, the NCC supports bipartisan action, such as the **Nurse Faculty Shortage Reduction Act (S.2815/H.R.7002)**, which would provide grant funding to close the pay gap between faculty and clinical nurses and the **Nurse Corps Tax Parity Act of 2023 (S.1446/H.R.5080)**. These efforts are essential and will help prepare nursing students as they transition from the classroom to the frontlines in communities across the country.
- **Support the Nursing Workforce: Ensure Patients have Access to the High-Quality Care Provided by our Nation's APRNs:** From primary and maternal care to acute and chronic care, APRNs provide high-quality care in all settings and in areas throughout the nation, including rural and underserved communities. As of 2021, 251,000 APRNs treated Medicare patients and over 40% of Medicare beneficiaries received care from an APRN.<sup>11</sup> The NCC urges Congress to consider and pass the **Improving Care and Access to Nurses (I CAN) Act (S.2418/H.R.2713)**. The I CAN Act would remove outdated barriers in the Medicare and Medicaid programs that currently prevent APRNs from practicing to the full extent of their education and clinical training.

Further, bills like the **Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act (S.131/H.R.618)** would retire outdated barriers in the Federal Employee's Compensation Act (FECA) that limit the ability of NPs to diagnose and oversee the care and treatment of federal employees who are injured or become ill in the course of their employment. Removing these barriers on APRNs and their patients is consistent with recommendations from a broad range of organizations, including the National Academy of Medicine, the National Governors Association, the National Rural Health Association, the Federal Trade Commission, the Bipartisan Policy Center, the Brookings Institution, Americans for Prosperity, and the American Enterprise Institute.

Another way to support APRNs is by making permanent the waivers that supported the nation during the Public Health Emergency (PHE). With the end of the PHE, several waivers also expired that had been implemented to ensure that patients had timely access to high quality care by nurses and APRNs. Therefore, we urge Congress to take

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<sup>11</sup> Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Data.CMS.gov. CMS Program Statistics-Medicare Providers. (2022) Retrieved from: <https://data.cms.gov/summary-statistics-on-use-and-payments/medicare-service-type-reports/cms-program-statistics-medicare-physician-non-physician-practitioner-supplier>

legislative action to make permanent [various waivers](#) so nurses and APRNs can continue to provide high quality health care to patients in all communities, now and into the future.

- **Institute Safety Measures for the Current and Future Nursing Workforce:** A culture of safety in care delivery settings, including violence prevention, is an indispensable aspect of a high-performing, high-quality health care system. Resources and investments are needed to build and sustain safe work environments and preventive practices. Funding should be directed toward concrete violence prevention efforts such as abatement of known risks (e.g. with respect to building exteriors and interiors) and establishment of robust ongoing prevention programs.
- **Invest in Maternal Health Today for a Healthier Tomorrow:** From growing and diversifying the perinatal workforce and investing in social determinants of health to supporting mom’s mental health and the nurses who are caring for these patients, legislation, such as the **Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act (H.R.3305/S.1606)** and **the Midwives for MOMS Act (H.R.3768/S.1851)**, provide a multipronged approach to addressing the maternal health needs in the United States. We encourage the passage of these bills this Congress.
- **Support the Mental Health and Healthy Working Environments for Nurses:** Caring for the caretaker has become even more important as we witnessed the mental stress public health challenges had on our frontline providers. In fact, an American Nurses Foundation survey found that 58% of nurses continue to feel exhausted and 50% report feeling overwhelmed.<sup>12</sup> In a separate study, “a quarter to half of nurses reported feeling emotionally drained (50.8%), used up (56.4%), fatigued (49.7%), burned out (45.1%), or at the end of the rope (29.4%) “a few times a week” or “every day.”<sup>13</sup> Part of this exhaustion among nurses can be attributed to the staffing shortage. In the January 2022 American Nurses Foundation’s Pulse on the Nation’s Nurses Two-Year Impact Assessment found that, “nine-out-of-ten nurses indicated their organization was experiencing a staffing shortage, with 90% classifying it as a serious problem.”<sup>14</sup> Separately, NCSBN highlighted that, “62% of the sample reported an increase in their workload during the pandemic.”<sup>15</sup> We appreciate the resources dedicated to health providers’ mental health in various legislative efforts, but more must be done. We strongly recommend Congress includes mental health resources, support for healthy working environments, and funding specifically for our nation’s nursing students, nurses, and APRNs, in any legislative package moving forward.

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<sup>12</sup>American Nurses Foundation. (2024). Mental Health and Wellness Survey 4. Retrieved from:

<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know/survey-4/>.

<sup>13</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2023) Examining the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Burnout & Stress Among U.S. Nurses. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncsbn.org/news/ncsbn-research-projects-significant-nursing-workforce-shortages-and-crisis> and [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(23\)00063-7/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(23)00063-7/fulltext)

<sup>14</sup>American Nurses Foundation. (2022). Pulse on the Nation’s Nurses Survey Series: 2022 Workplace Survey Nurses Not Feeling Heard, Ongoing Staffing and Workplace Issues Contributing to Unhealthy Work Environment. Page 2. August 2, 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.nursingworld.org/~4a209f/globalassets/covid19/anf-2022-workforce-written-report-final.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing (2023) Examining the Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Burnout & Stress Among U.S. Nurses. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncsbn.org/news/ncsbn-research-projects-significant-nursing-workforce-shortages-and-crisis> and [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(23\)00063-7/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(23)00063-7/fulltext)

- Invest in our Public Health Infrastructure:** According to a national profile of local health departments (LHDs), “across all LHDs, more than 20,000 FTEs were office and administrative support staff or registered nurses.”<sup>16</sup> We must ensure nurses are at the table as we plan for tomorrow’s public health needs. This includes ensuring nursing students, nurses, and APRNs are incorporated into all aspects of public health infrastructure and that our public health departments have at least one nurse or APRN on staff.

With over four and half million licensed Registered Nurses (RNs), APRNs, and nursing students, the profession embodies the drive and passion to ensure the health of patients, families, and our country continues to improve.<sup>17</sup> We urge Congress, especially during National Nurses Week, to take legislative action, support the current and future nursing workforce, and honor the essential work they provide to our healthcare system and to the public health of our nation. As these conversations continue, and if our organizations can be of any assistance or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the coalition’s Executive Director, Rachel Stevenson, at [rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org](mailto:rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org).

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses  
 Academy of Neonatal Nursing  
 Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments  
 American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing  
 American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners  
 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 Anesthesiology  
 American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
 American Association of Occupational Health Nurses  
 American Association of Post-Acute Care Nursing  
 American College of Nurse-Midwives  
 American Nephrology Nurses Association  
 American Nurses Association  
 American Nursing Informatics Association  
 American Organization for Nursing Leadership  
 American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association, Inc.  
 American Public Health Association, Public Health Nursing Section  
 American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
 American Society for Pain Management Nursing  
 American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses  
 Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing  
 Association of Community Health Nursing Educators  
 Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
 Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses

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<sup>16</sup> National Association of County & City Health Officials (2022). 2022 National Profile of Local Health Departments. Page 52. Retrieved from: [https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/NACCHO\\_2022\\_Profile\\_Report.pdf](https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/NACCHO_2022_Profile_Report.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2024). Active RN Licenses: A profile of nursing licensure in the U.S. as of April 25, 2024. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncsbn.org/6161.htm>.

Association of periOperative Registered Nurses  
Association of Public Health Nurses  
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses  
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service  
Dermatology Nurses' Association  
Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
Emergency Nurses Association  
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 Hispanic Nurses  
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Neonatal Nurses  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Council of State Boards of Nursing  
National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers  
National Hartford Center of Gerontological Nursing Excellence  
National League for Nursing  
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium  
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties  
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing  
Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society  
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association  
Society of Pediatric Nurses  
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates  
Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society

CC: All members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate