

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 20, 2007

The Honorable Dave Obey  
Chairman,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Walsh  
Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

We are writing in support of \$200 million in FY 2008 appropriations for the Nursing Workforce Development Programs administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The programs, authorized by Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, could make a real difference in the national nursing shortage if funded sufficiently. Following several years of flat funding at \$150 million, the President proposed cutting funding for Title VIII programs to only \$105.3 million in FY2008. We believe an increase in funding to \$200 million is needed to maintain advanced education nursing programs, to invest in nursing education capacity, and to support programs that direct nurses into critical shortage areas. We also urge you to restore funding for advanced practice nursing programs, which were eliminated in the President's budget request.

The United States is experiencing a nursing shortage that is projected to deepen over the next decade. HRSA projects that, absent aggressive intervention, the supply of nurses in America will fall 36 percent (more than 1 million nurses) below requirements by the year 2020. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that registered nurses are projected to create the second largest number of new jobs among all occupations in the time period spanning 2004 – 2014. During this time period, the health care system will require more than 1.2 million new nurses.


Nurses are also the cornerstone of bioterrorism and pandemic flu preparedness and response. If these events were to occur, an adequate supply of nurses will be needed to evaluate patients, administer vaccines and medications, perform disease surveillance, and train non-licensed staff. The GAO, the American Hospital Association, and Trust for America's Health have all released reports citing the nursing shortage as a major impediment to preparedness efforts.

This nursing shortage is also having a negative impact on critical military health care programs. In 2005, Army leaders warned the Senate Appropriations Committee that they were experiencing a 30% shortage of certified registered nurse anesthetists. In 2006, leaders from the Navy Nurse Corps reported a deficit in nursing end strength with a 43% shortage of critical care nurses, and a 16% shortage of nurse anesthetists.

Current funding levels fail to meet the growing need for nurses. In fact, Title VIII funding has decreased over the last three fiscal years, as the nursing shortage has grown. Now is the time to invest in nursing. Your support for at least \$200 million in FY 2008 funding for Nursing Workforce Development will make a real difference in this developing crisis.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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