March 26, 2015

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We respectfully request that the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration) receive $244 million in Fiscal Year 2016 through the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill. An investment in our nursing workforce today is a commitment to America’s healthcare now and into the future.

It is critical that the nation prepares now for the current and impending strains on our healthcare system. A growing number of patients with multiple chronic conditions, baby boomers requiring additional health services, increased access to the healthcare system, and an aging healthcare workforce are converging simultaneously. Preparing now to meet these demands is a wise investment in our nation’s health.

For 50 years, the Title VIII programs have bolstered the nursing workforce by increasing the number of Registered Nurses and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, as well as the nurse faculty who educate them. In academic year 2013-2014, the Title VIII Advanced Nursing Education (ANE) Grants program supported 10,504 graduate nursing students. Moreover, ANE grantees partnered with 5,100 clinical training sites, of which 46 percent were located in medically-underserved areas and 40 percent were in primary care settings. Additionally, the Title VIII NURSE Corps Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program supported 1,446 students. Recipients of NURSE Corps funding commit to serving in either a Critical Shortage Facility or to teaching in an accredited school of nursing, thereby educating future generations of nurses.

Title VIII recipients are direct investments in our nation’s health. The programs are designed to address specific needs within the nursing workforce and America’s patient populations. Therefore, strong support for Title VIII reinforces our healthcare delivery system’s ability to provide timely access to cost-effective care in all communities.
We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our request and understand the difficult decisions your Subcommittee will face in this fiscal climate. Support for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs is a direct investment in the nursing workforce, our nation’s well-being, and the sustainability of our healthcare system as a whole.

Sincerely,

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Gary Peters
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Dbbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey Jr.
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Chris Coons
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator
Al Franken  
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator

Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator