

 American Association
of Colleges of Nursing

April 8, 2009

The Honorable Herb Kohl
U.S. Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kohl:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), I would like to thank you for proposing the *Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act of 2009*. We value your firm commitment to alleviating the nursing shortage and improving the care available to America's aging population.

In its 2008 report, "*Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce*," the Institute of Medicine concluded that our nation has a dire need to prepare a healthcare workforce that is educated to meet the unique care needs of our aging population. One of the most troubling findings related to nursing is that currently less than one percent of all nurses are certified in gerontology. Clearly, the shortage of gerontological nurses combined with the national nursing shortage demonstrates a cause for concern among policy makers.

Section 121 of Subtitle B in your legislation would help prepare nurses to care for the older population by amending and expanding the Comprehensive Geriatric Education Program in Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act. This would support additional training in geriatrics for nurses and nursing faculty, including development of curricula relating to geriatric nursing care and traineeships for individuals pursuing advanced degrees in geriatric nursing.

Your bill is a comprehensive approach to addressing the shortages of health professionals who have a distinct and critical expertise in gerontology. As an organization representing nursing education, we specifically support Section 121 of your bill. Thank you again for your support for geriatric nursing education. Please feel free to have a member of your staff contact Suzanne Begeny, Director of Government Affairs, at sbegeny@aacn.nche.edu or 202-463-6930 if AACN can be of any service.

Sincerely,



Fay Raines, PhD, RN
President

ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING