



Submitted by: Suzanne Begeny, PhD, RN
Nursing Community
sbegeny@aacn.nche.edu/(202)463-6930 x247

**Testimony of the Nursing Community Regarding
Fiscal Year 2011 Appropriations for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development
Programs
U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and
Education**

April 15, 2010

The Nursing Community is a forum for professional nursing and related organizations to collaborate on a wide spectrum of healthcare and nursing issues including practice, education, and research. These 53 organizations are committed to promoting America's health through nursing care. Collectively, the Nursing Community represents over 850,000 Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), nurse executives, nursing students, nursing faculty, and nurse researchers. Together, our organizations work collaboratively to increase funding for the Nursing Workforce Development programs, authorized under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.) so that American nurses have the support needed to provide high quality care to their patients.

The National Nursing Shortage Continues to Impact Quality Care

Since 1998, the United States has experienced a significant shortage of RNs, which has dramatically impacted the quality of care provided by our nation's healthcare delivery system. In March 2007, a comprehensive report initiated by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality was released on *Nursing Staffing and Quality of Patient Care*. The authors found that the shortage of RNs, in combination with an increased workload, poses a potential threat to the quality of nursing care. In settings with inadequate nurse staffing, patient safety was compromised. However, increases in RN staffing were associated with reductions in hospital-related mortality and failure to rescue, as well as reduced lengths of stay. A robust supply of well-educated nurses is essential to ensure that all Americans receive quality health care and that our nation has the nurses necessary to meet the current and future demands.

The demand for nurses will continue to grow as the baby-boomer population ages, nurses retire, and the need for healthcare intensifies. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), nursing is the nation's top profession in terms of projected job growth with more than 581,000 new nursing positions being created through 2018 (a 22% increase in the workforce). Further, BLS analysts project that more than one million new and replacement nurses will be needed by 2016.

Currently, RNs comprise the largest group of health professionals with approximately 3.1 million providers offering essential care to patients in a variety of settings, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, community or public health areas, schools, workplaces, and home care. In addition, many nurses receive graduate degrees that allow them to practice autonomously as APRNs; become nurse faculty, nurse researchers, nurse administrators, and public health nurses; and work in the policy area to help shape healthcare delivery. With the new health reform law focused on creating a system that will increase access to quality care, emphasize prevention, and decrease cost, it is critical that a substantial investment be made in our healthcare workforce, particularly an investment in nurses. RNs and APRNs are vital to ensuring direct availability to high quality, cost-effective health care in a reformed system. Nurses are involved in every aspect of health care, and if the nursing workforce is not strengthened, the healthcare system will continue to suffer.

Reversing the Nursing Shortage: A Federal Solution

Throughout previous nursing shortages, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government has offered relief to nursing schools and students to reverse the negative trend. In particular, the Nursing Workforce Development programs offered viable solutions to nursing shortages, expanded nursing school programs, increased the number of nurse faculty, and helped ensure nurses were practicing in areas with a critical shortage. As Congress searches for programs to address the nursing shortage now and in the future, the Title VIII programs have been and continue to be a proven solution.

Nursing Workforce Development Programs

The Nursing Workforce Development programs have supported the supply and distribution of qualified nurses to meet our nation's healthcare needs since 1964. Over the last 46 years, these programs have addressed all aspects of nursing shortages – education, practice, retention, and recruitment. The Title VIII programs bolster nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study, and provide support for institutions that educate nurses for practice in rural and medically underserved communities. Between FY 2006 and 2008, the Title VIII programs supported 214,575 nurses and nursing students as well as numerous academic nursing institutions, and healthcare facilities. Today, the Title VIII programs are essential to solving the current national nursing shortage.

Title VIII Effectiveness

Results from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN) *2009-2010 Title VIII Student Recipient Survey* included responses from 1,420 students who noted that these programs played a critical role in funding their nursing education. The survey showed that three-quarters of the students receiving Title VIII funding are attending school full-time. By supporting full-time students, the Title VIII programs are helping to ensure that students enter the workforce without delay. The programs also address the current demand for primary care providers. A high percentage of the students surveyed (49.1%) reported that their career goal is to become a nurse practitioner. Approximately 80% of nurse practitioners provide primary care services throughout the United States. Additionally, the nurse faculty shortage continues to inhibit the ability of nursing schools to increase student capacity and address the shortage. Of the students who responded to the survey, 40.5% stated their ultimate career goal was to become nurse faculty.

Nursing Students Supported by Title VIII Funding

Of the Title VIII student recipients surveyed, 39% reported that they received between \$1,001-\$3,000 in funding over one year. Sixty-seven percent reported that this funding supported a portion of their tuition, and 35.8% reported that the funding was dedicated to books and educational materials. Fifty-two percent of the students responded that the Title VIII funding paid for 25% or less of their total student loans. Of those students, 26% stated that the funding paid for less than 5% of their total nursing student loans. When asked how the Title VIII programs could be improved, the overwhelming response from students was to increase the funding in order to provide higher levels of support for their education.

Nursing students rely upon support through Title VIII to complete their degree and offset their considerable educational expenses. Continued and increased support for the Title VIII programs can help address the demand for nursing services.

The Nursing Community respectfully request \$267.3 million (a 10% increase) for the Nursing Workforce Development programs authorized under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act in FY 2011. Last year, your Subcommittee provided a significant funding boost for Title VIII that helped support the Loan Repayment program and Scholarship and Nurse Faculty Loan program. These increases will bolster the pipeline of nurses and nurse faculty, which is so critical to reversing the nursing shortage. We feel it is extremely important to maintain last year's funding level for these critical programs in FY 2011 and direct the 10% requested increase for the four Title VIII program that have not kept pace with inflation since FY 2005. The Advanced Education Nursing, Nursing Workforce Diversity, Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention, and Comprehensive Geriatric Education programs expand nursing school capacity and increase patient access to care. These programs would greatly benefit from the 10% increase awarded in proportion to their FY 2010 funding level. Below is a description of these four critical programs.

Advanced Education Nursing (AEN) Grants (Sec. 811) support the preparation of RNs in master's and doctoral nursing programs. The AEN grants help to prepare our nation's nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists, nurse educators, nurse administrators, public health nurses, and other nurse specialists requiring advanced education. In FY 2008 (most current data available), these grants supported the education of 5,649 students.

- **AEN Traineeships** assist graduate nursing students by providing full or partial reimbursement for the costs of tuition, books, program fees and reasonable living expenses. In FY 2008, this funding helped support 6,675 graduate nurses and APRNs.
- **Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships (NAT)** support the education of students in nurse anesthetist programs. In some states, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are the sole anesthesia providers in almost 100% of rural hospitals. Much like the AEN Traineeships, the NAT provides full or partial support for the costs of tuition, books, program fees, and reasonable living expenses. In FY 2008, the program supported 2,145 future CRNAs.

Workforce Diversity Grants (Sec. 821) prepare disadvantaged students to become nurses. This program awards grants and contract opportunities to schools of nursing, nurse managed health centers, academic health centers, state or local governments, and nonprofit

entities looking to increase access to nursing education for disadvantaged students, including racial and ethnic minorities under-represented among RNs. In FY 2008, the program supported 11,638 students.

Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants (Sec. 831) help schools of nursing, academic health centers, nurse-managed health centers, state and local governments, and healthcare facilities strengthen programs that provide nursing education. In FY 2008, the priority areas under this program supported 42,761 with an additional 455 students supported by the Integrated Nurse Education Technology program.

Comprehensive Geriatric Education Grants (Sec. 855) are awarded to schools of nursing or healthcare facilities to better provide nursing services for the elderly. These grants are used to educate RNs who will provide direct care to older Americans, develop and disseminate geriatric curriculum, prepare faculty members, and provide continuing education. In FY 2008, this program supported 6,514 nurses and nursing students.

Without an adequate supply of nurses to care for our nation, including our growing aging population, the healthcare system is not sustainable. The Nursing Community's request of \$267.3 million in FY 2011 for the HRSA Nursing Workforce Development programs will help ensure access to quality care provided by America's nursing workforce.

Members of the Nursing Community Submitting this Testimony

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses	Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing	Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners	Infusion Nurses Society
American Academy of Nursing	National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
American Association of Colleges of Nursing	National Association of Hispanic Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists	National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
American College of Nurse Practitioners	National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
American College of Nurse-Midwives	National Black Nurses Association
American Nurses Association	National Nursing Centers Consortium
American Organization of Nurse Executives	National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
American Psychiatric Nurses Association	National Student Nurses' Association, Inc
American Society for Pain Management Nursing	Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators	Oncology Nursing Society
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care	Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses	Public Health Nursing Section, American Public Health Association
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses	Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses	Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service	
Dermatology Nurses' Association	