

February 9, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chair
Appropriations Committee
S-131 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
S-146A U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Inouye, Cochran, Harkin, and Specter:

The undersigned nursing organizations respectfully request that during the negotiations of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the \$600 million House provision for nursing and health professions training be included in the final stimulus package passed by both the House and Senate. A significant portion of this funding would be dedicated to filling the nation's current need for well over 140,000 registered nursing positions by providing a much needed increase in funding for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs administered by HRSA/HHS.

At a time when millions of Americans are unemployed, good paying registered nursing jobs are going unfilled in our hospitals, nursing homes, health departments, and community health centers. Nursing positions are in great demand as there is currently an 8.1% vacancy rate across the country according to American Hospital Association. Funding for nurse training will lead to real jobs because a very real need exists. The demand for nursing jobs can only be met with nurses graduating from these training programs. Funding for nurse training will meaningfully contribute to the reduction of the unemployment rate.

Moreover, the *New York Times* recently reported on the Japanese experience with a stimulus plan. It was noted that "spending in knowledge-based services like health care and education" brings larger benefits to advanced economies like Japan's and ours by inference. The article further noted that the return on financing for education through a stimulus package was almost 25% greater than other forms of spending. Investing in nurse training will yield a greater economic return.

Maintaining the House's level of support for nurse training would pave the way to fill thousands of job openings within the next 1-3 years and strengthen the healthcare workforce, which is necessary to improve access and quality while lowering costs.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Our nation's patients will benefit most from this funding as more nurses will be available to provide high-quality, cost-effective care.

Respectfully,

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators
American Association of Nurse Executives
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nephrology Nurses' Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic & Imaging Nursing
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Emergency Nurses Association
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
National American Arab Nurses Association
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council of State Boards of Nursing
National Gerontological Nursing Association
National League for Nursing
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Registered Nurses First Assistants Policy & Advocacy Coalition
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
The Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations

Visiting Nurse Associations of America
Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society

Cc:

Senator Herbert Kohl

Senator Patty Murray

Senator Mary Landrieu

Senator Richard Durbin

Senator Jack Reed

Senator Frank Lautenberg

Senator Judd Gregg

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

Senator Richard Shelby