Dear Nursing Leader:

For more than ten years, our Nation's veterans, service members and their families have dedicated their lives to ensuring the safety of our Nation. Since 9/11, more than 2,000,000 troops have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. While their achievements have been extraordinary, the sacrifices they have made are significant—more than 6,000 killed and nearly 50,000 wounded. However, these are only the visible wounds of war.

The invisible wounds of war, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), have been equally significant. By every estimation, 1 in 6 troops—more than 300,000 Americans—have been impacted by PTSD and TBI as a result of their service to this country.

For those suffering from these conditions, we know that proven, evidence-based treatment regimens can dramatically improve their quality of life. We also know that only half of veterans seek care in the VA health system. In order to reach all of our Nation's veterans and their families, we need to meet them where they are—by connecting with our veterans in every community in America.

Nurses have an important role to play in ensuring that returning service members and their families get the high quality care they deserve. Nurses provide lifesaving and life-sustaining services in nearly every community and every setting where health care is delivered. You are positioned to make a dramatic and positive impact on the long-term health of hundreds of thousands of veterans.

That is why we are asking every nursing organization across America to help. By preparing nurses to recognize and understand those who are military-connected, and by ensuring nurses learn and anticipate the warning signs for critical health issues, we know our military service members and their families will get the care they need and deserve.

Already, more than 90 nursing organizations from around the country have pledged their support. Please join this group of nurses in our collective efforts to help those who have sacrificed so much for our Nation. Visit http://www.anajoiningforces.org/ and sign a pledge that your nursing organization will help. We ask that this pledge be signed by April 3rd. This commitment will be made public through an announcement on April 12th.

Thank you for making a positive difference in the lives of our Nation’s veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

CAPT C.B. Cooper II, USN
Executive Director
Joining Forces
Office of the First Lady