

TITLE VIII: FUNDING FOR NURSING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

POSITION

ANA urges Congress to significantly invest in funding for the Nursing Workforce Development programs administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act.

BACKGROUND

The Nursing Workforce Development programs are the primary source of Federal funding for nursing education. The major grant program areas are:

- *Advanced Nursing Education*—Provides grants to nursing schools, academic health centers, and other entities to enhance education and practice for nurses in master’s and post-master’s programs. These programs prepare nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists, nurse educators, nurse administrators, and public health nurses.
- *Workforce Diversity Grants*—Provides grants to increase opportunities for individuals who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, including students from economically disadvantaged families as well as racial and ethnic minorities underrepresented in the nursing profession.
- *Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants*—Supports schools and nurses at the associate and baccalaureate degree level. Grants are provided to schools of nursing, academic health centers, nursing centers, state and local governments and other public or private nonprofit entities. Some grants (such as grants promoting the Magnet Hospital best practices for nursing administration) are also available to health care facilities.
- *National Nurse Service Corps*— as reauthorized under the Affordable Care Act –
 - The Nurse Education Loan Repayment Program repays 60 to 85 percent of nursing student loans in return for at least two years of practice in a facility designated to have a critical nursing shortage.
 - The Nursing Scholarship Program supports students enrolled in nursing school. Upon graduation, scholarship recipients are required to work full-time for at least two years in a facility designated to have a critical nursing shortage.
- *Nurse Faculty Loan Program*—Establishes loan programs within schools of nursing to support students pursuing masters and doctoral degrees. Upon graduation, loan recipients are required to teach at a school of nursing in exchange for cancellation of up to 85 percent of their educational loans, plus interest, over four years.
- *Comprehensive Geriatric Education Grants*—Provides grants to train nurses who provide direct care for the elderly, to support geriatric nursing curriculum, to train faculty in geriatrics, and to provide continuing education to nurses who provide geriatric care.

RATIONALE

A sufficient supply of nurses is critical to providing our nation’s population with quality health care now and into the future. Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) are the backbone of hospitals, community clinics, school health programs,

home health and long-term care programs, and serve patients in many other roles and settings. The Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) *Employment Projections* for 2010-2020 state the expected number of practicing nurses will grow from 2.74 million in 2010 to 3.45 million in 2020, an increase of 712,000 or 26 percent.

Contrary to the good news that there are a growing number of nurses, the current nurse workforce is aging. According to the *2008 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses*, over one million of the nation's 2.6 million practicing RNs are over the age of 50. Within this population, more than 275,000 nurses are over the age of 60. As the economy continues to rebound, many of these nurses will seek retirement, leaving behind a significant deficit in the number of experienced nurses in the workforce. According to Douglas Staiger, author of a *New England Journal of Medicine* study, the nursing shortage will "re-emerge" from 2010 and 2015 as 118,000 nurses will stop working full time as the economy grows.

Furthermore, as of January 1, 2011 Baby Boomers began turning 65 at the rate of 10,000 a day. With this aging population, the healthcare workforce will need to grow as there is an increase in demand for nursing care in traditional acute care settings as well as the expansion of non-hospital settings such as home care and long-term care.

The BLS projections explain a need for 495,500 replacements in the nursing workforce, bringing the total number of job openings for nurses due to growth and replacements to 1.2 million by 2020. A shortage of this magnitude would be twice as large as any shortage experienced by this country since the 1960s. Cuts to Title VIII funding are detrimental to the health care system and the patients we serve.

Title VIII holds the promise of addressing many of the challenges facing nursing. But, this promise cannot be met without a significant investment in funding for the Nursing Workforce Development programs.