May 25, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt  The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee Appropriations Committee
United States Senate United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We respectfully request that the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, administered by HRSA) receive $244 million in Fiscal Year 2018 through the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. An investment in our nursing workforce today is a commitment to America’s health care now and into the future.

More than ever, it is essential that communities across the nation have access to safe, high-quality nursing care. For over five decades, the Title VIII programs have been directly tied to this endeavor. The programs bolster nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study, and also support academic institutions and the nurse faculty who prepare today’s nursing students to be tomorrow’s expert clinicians.

Title VIII programs strengthen the workforce and the care patients receive on multiple levels. For example, in Academic Year 2014-2015, the Title VIII Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship supported 3,008 students, of which 72% were trained in primary care. Additionally, 55% of Title VIII Loan Repayment Program participants working in an underserved area as a condition of loan repayment voluntarily extended their service contracts to continue providing care to these vulnerable populations. Collectively, the programs supported over 61,000 students in academic year 2015-2016 alone and assisted in bridging patients with nursing care across a variety of settings, including community health centers, hospitals, and schools of nursing, to name a few.

Title VIII programs also aim to promote a diverse nursing workforce to reflect an increasingly diverse patient population. In 2014-2015, the Nursing Workforce Diversity program supported 13,225 nursing students and aspiring students to promote the recruitment of individuals from racial and ethnic minorities underrepresented in registered nursing.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our request and understand the difficult decisions your Subcommittee will face in this fiscal climate. However, support for Title VIII Nursing
Workforce Development Programs is a direct investment in the nursing workforce, our nation's well-being, and the sustainability of our health care system as a whole.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senate

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate

Cory A. Booker
United States Senate

Sherrod Brown
United States Senate

Robert P. Casey Jr.
United States Senate

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senate

Al Franken
United States Senate

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senate

Martin Heinrich
United States Senate

Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senate

Tim Kaine
United States Senate

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senate

Christopher Murphy  
United States Senate

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senate

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senate

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senate

Jon Tester  
United States Senate

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senate

Robert Menendez  
United States Senate

Bill Nelson  
United States Senate

Jack Reed  
United States Senate

Brian Schatz  
United States Senate

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senate

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senate

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senate

Ron Wyden  
United States Senate