

DEANS' NURSING POLICY COALITION



To: House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

Subject: FY25 Written Public Testimony for the Record

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Testimony of the Deans' Nursing Policy Coalition

U.S. House Appropriations Committee Labor Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Introduction

Honorable Chairman Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, the Deans' Nursing Policy Coalition respectfully submits this testimony to the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, Labor Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee, to discuss the importance of increasing appropriations for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs at the Health Resource Services Agency (HRSA), the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act.

Our Coalition is comprised of ten research-intensive schools of nursing that generate evidence for effective health care practice and translate that knowledge to the education and policy environments. As leaders in both undergraduate and graduate-level nursing, our schools also focus on educating advanced practice nurses to lead innovations in patient care in clinical settings, developing expert faculty to train the next generation of nurses, and educating PhD prepared nurse scientists to conduct cutting-edge research. Our graduates practice throughout the country in both rural and urban areas.

The Urgent Need for Enhanced Nursing Education and Workforce Development Efforts

Nursing continues to be the largest healthcare profession in the U.S. and remains on the forefront as our healthcare workforce seeks to meet growing healthcare challenges. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare an already critical nursing workforce shortage that is continuing

to be felt and presents real challenges nationwide. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 203,200 openings for RNs in the U.S. each year through 2031. With an aging population with greater healthcare needs, an aging clinical and faculty workforce, and a decline in the number of students in entry-level baccalaureate nursing programs, action must be taken to alleviate this crisis and ensure an ample, well-trained nursing workforce for the future.

One of the Coalition's highest priorities is addressing this growing demand while dealing with ongoing nursing shortages. Funding of education programs for nurses, nurse faculty, and advanced nurse practitioners and support for nurse scientists is a critical step towards ensuring the future of our workforce, as well as the shared goals of improving quality, increasing access, and reducing the health care costs of all taxpayers. While recognizing the fiscal challenges facing our country, we must underscore the importance of these investments. The recent experience with COVID brought to light the critical role nurses played and the challenges being faced by the health care community, and nursing in particular.

Health Research Services Administration (HRSA)

The Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII), as funded through the HRSA Bureau of Health Workforce, are critical to ensuring a sufficient number of nurses, nurse faculty and clinical preceptors. The Coalition is requesting \$530 million for the Title VIII Programs to make investments in the pipeline of registered and advanced practice registered nurses critical to ensuring that more Americans have access to quality health care.

Within the Title VIII programs at HRSA, the Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention Programs (NEPQR) provides funding to schools of nursing to increase the number of faculty. Increasing the number of nursing faculty is critical to increasing the overall number of nurses at all levels, including Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) prepared nurses.

Another element of Title VIII we want to highlight to the Subcommittee is the Nurse Corps. Critically, this program supports nurses and nursing students committed to working in communities with inadequate access to care. There is particular attention to those specializing in behavioral and mental health and maternal care. This scholarship and loan repayment assistance has contributed to improving access and helped recruit and retain nurses serving in these areas.

The health care system in this country is undergoing tremendous change. It is responding to an increasingly diverse population and one that is aging. To complicate matters, there is a growing shortage of nurses and the faculty who train them in both ADN as well as baccalaureate programs which is resulting in necessary restrictions in enrollments at all our nursing schools including those offering associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees and advanced degrees, and a real shortage of those providing care. We need nurses trained at all degree levels to provide care in hospitals and other sites of care in both urban and rural areas.

According to a May 2023 American Association of Colleges and Nursing (AACN) report (New Data Show Enrollment Declines in Schools of Nursing, Raising Concerns About the Nation's Nursing Workforce (aacnnursing.org)), U.S. nursing schools turned away 78,191 qualified applications from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2022 in large part because of the shortage of nursing faculty. That trend continues today. The shortage is a critical problem limiting student capacity at a time when the need for professional nurses continues to grow. This need was underscored and highlighted as a result of the recent pandemic.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) issued a report in 2021¹ that provided recommendations to Congress to ease the nursing shortage in America. We applaud the inclusion of report language in the FY24 bill noting the need for HRSA to include more training opportunities to promote nursing careers. We look forward to working with HRSA as it is implemented.

Looking forward to your consideration of FY25, we ask that you include the following in your committee report, underscoring the need for adequate funding for the preparation of nurses along with support for needed faculty and clinical preceptor sites:

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 203,200 openings for nurses in the U.S. each year through 2031. With an aging population with greater healthcare needs, an aging clinical and faculty workforce, and a decline in the number of students in entry-level nursing programs, the Committee believes action must be taken to alleviate this crisis and ensure an ample, well-trained nursing workforce for the future. The Committee supports efforts to expand the nursing workforce at all levels to meet the growing health needs of our population; this includes diploma programs, associate degree programs, baccalaureate programs, and advanced practice programs. The Committee also supports efforts to greatly expand the number of nursing faculty and clinical preceptor sites to educate students at all levels, ensuring we have a workforce able to address social drivers of health and close the health equity gaps that exist.

We thank the Committee for recognizing the urgent need to address the nursing shortage in all parts of the U.S. and grow the pipeline of nurse educators to meet the demand to grow the workforce as noted above, and the Coalition respectfully asks that you provide \$530 million for Title VIII in FY25.

Supporting Nursing Research and Innovation

National Institute of Nursing Research

The Coalition remains committed to ensuring robust funding for NIH and NINR. As health professionals work toward identifying better treatments and cures to diseases and disorders, nursing — and nursing research — has a critical role to play. We are asking the committee to provide \$51.33 billion for the NIH and \$210 million for NINR in FY25.

Nursing research conducted through the NIH and NINR provides a valuable tool to address priority health issues, including the testing of new models of care. Nurse scientists have demonstrated methods that reduce hospital stays for patients with cancer, heart failure, dementia, and of course, COVID-19. It has been said that at the forefront of nursing is the need to increase these discoveries that improve health outcomes. Moreover, nurse scientists have demonstrated that prevention reduces illness resulting in a healthier population. The number of applications funded falls far short of the number submitted and the number awarded because of relatively flat funding. It is our hope that the funding levels for NINR will continue to receive robust increases over time to meet this increasing need.

¹ <https://nam.edu/publications/the-future-of-nursing-2020-2030>

National Health Service Corps

The Coalition continues to support robust funding for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC). The Coalition requests the Subcommittee provide \$128.6 million for the National Health Service Corps to ensure primary care professionals, including nurse practitioners, receive support to allow them to choose to serve in medically underserved areas of the country.

The Corps provides important support for nurse education with loan repayment and scholarship opportunities for primary care providers, nurse practitioners, mental health, and dental health professionals in exchange for service in health centers, rural health clinics and other facilities experiencing critical shortages of health professionals. These are critical resources in helping to build healthy communities and removing financial barriers for health professionals who are called on to provide care in high-need areas.

Enhancing Health Care Provider Support through the Lorna Breen Act

The pandemic brought to the forefront the extraordinary challenges being faced by providers across the country. Nurses, physicians, and others experienced extraordinary amounts of stress and burnout leading to a variety of mental health conditions, stress, and suicide. The Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act, signed into law in 2022, is focused on funding wellness initiatives in hospitals and other health care locations to assist these providers, reduce burnout and provide support needed.

We urge you to support \$45 million to fund these targeted, evidence-based grant programs that are critical to addressing the unmet needs of our health professionals.

Conclusion

In closing, the investments our coalition request today are not merely fiscal considerations but a necessary pledge to the health and security of our nation. We thank you for your past support and urge you to continue to prioritize healthcare in FY25. Our coalition remains ready to assist and provide expertise as these programs are implemented and expanded.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to the health of all Americans.

Submitted on behalf of the Deans' Nursing Policy Coalition by:

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Dean and Professor of Nursing
Dean and Valere Potter Distinguished Professor of Nursing
Vanderbilt University School of Nursing
Chair, Deans' Nursing Policy Coalition



VANDERBILT
School of Nursing

FACULTY PROFILE

Pamela R. Jeffries PhD, RN, FAAN, ANEF, FSSH

DEAN, VANDERBILT SCHOOL OF NURSING

VALERE POTTER DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF NURSING, RWJF NURSE

EXECUTIVE FELLOW ALUMNA

Bio

Pamela Jeffries is an internationally recognized leader and researcher in nursing and health care education, with a reputation for innovation in teaching strategies, experiential learning, new pedagogies and the use of technology. She became the ninth dean of Vanderbilt University School of Nursing on July 1, 2021.

Dean Jeffries has been principle investigator on federal, state and organization grants from entities such as the National Institute of Health, Health Resources and Service Administration, National League for Nursing and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. She is recognized for the development of the NLN Jeffries Simulation Theory, considered the major contribution to simulation scholarship.

Prior to being named VUSN dean, she served as the second dean of the George Washington University School of Nursing. In her six-year tenure, she expanded the infrastructure and processes and standards for the emerging school, leading it through a significant period of growth. Before joining George Washington University, she had a series of progressively responsible leadership roles at The Johns Hopkins University, where she was professor of nursing, associate dean for academic programs and vice dean of faculty for the School of Nursing before being appointed vice provost for digital initiatives for the university.

Dean Jeffries is a popular national and international speaker who has also served as a consultant on clinical education, simulations and other emerging technologies. She has published extensively and is the editor of four books, *Simulations in Nursing*

Education: From Conceptualization to Evaluation (3rd edition), The NLN Jeffries Simulation Theory Monograph, Developing Simulation Centers Using the Consortium Model and Clinical Simulations in Nursing Education: Advanced Concepts, Trends, and Opportunities.

Dean Jeffries is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN), fellow of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare Academy (FSSH), fellow of the Academy of Nurse Educators (ANEF), inductee into the Sigma Theta Tau International Research Hall of Fame, and recipient of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Excellence Award. She is also a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Executive Fellow. She is active in a variety of professional organizations, including the National League for Nursing and Society for Simulation in Healthcare, Global Network for Simulation in Healthcare (GNSH), and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Nursing and GNSH.

Education

- Indiana University, Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (formerly DNSc)
- Indiana University, Master of Science in Nursing
- Ball State University, Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Current Research/Scholarly Interests

- Technology in nursing education
- Experiential learning
- Innovative teaching strategies
- Online teaching and learning
- New pedagogies
- Simulation development