The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin, and Ranking Member Moran:

We respectfully request that the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, administered by HRSA) receive $251 million in Fiscal Year 2014. Title VIII programs help to ensure that nursing care reaches our nation’s most vulnerable populations and underserved communities.

Now, more than ever, our nation must prepare to increase our nursing workforce. America’s healthcare system is already stressed due to the aging Baby Boomer population, the growing incidence of chronic diseases, and a shortage of providers in all specialties, particularly primary care. Nurses are integral to addressing these healthcare demands as their care crosses the continuum and is linked to lowering costs, improving quality, and increasing access.

For nearly five decades, the Title VIII programs have bolstered the nursing workforce by increasing the number of Registered Nurses and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, as well as the nurse faculty who educate them. Most critically, the programs ensure nurses are providing care to the communities that are in desperate need of their services. The Nursing Education Loan Repayment and Nursing Scholarship Programs (now the NURSE Corps), which provide loan forgiveness and scholarship aid in exchange for service in a critical shortage facility, link nurses to communities that struggle to retain healthcare providers. In FY 2012, the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program committed to supporting 1,452 nurses working in these facilities. In addition, the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship Program graduated 1,796 nursing students last year who are currently serving in underserved areas.

Nurses are an integral member of the healthcare team responding to our nation’s most devastating crises and providing care to patients and their families when they are at their weakest. By investing in Title VIII, we invest in the care they provide.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our request and understand the difficult decisions your Subcommittee will face in this fiscal climate. 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 healthcare system as a whole.

Sincerely,
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

Carl Levin  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senator

John D. Rockefeller IV  
United States Senator

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

Tim Johnson  
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator