November XX, 2013

The Honorable Patty Murray
Senate Budget Committee
United States Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
House Budget Committee
United States House of Representatives
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murray and Chairman Ryan,

As you continue to collaborate with your colleagues on the current budget negotiations, the undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community respectfully urge you to ensure that investments in nursing education and research programs are protected from further cuts in FY 2014 and in the future. The Nursing Community is a coalition comprised of national professional nursing associations that builds consensus and advocates on a wide spectrum of healthcare issues. Collectively, our organizations represent nearly one million registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, nurse executives, nursing students, faculty, and researchers.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, an additional 1.2 million registered nurses will be needed by the year 2020. As the national demand for these clinicians continues to expand, it is imperative that investments are made in future generations of practicing nurses and nurse faculty. Sequestration has limited the ability of the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act) to bolster the nursing pipeline. Through programmatic and direct student support, the Title VIII programs help prepare a nursing workforce that increases access to care in America’s most underserved areas. For example, Title VIII supports Nurse Managed Health Clinics that provide primary care, health promotion, and disease prevention to individuals with limited access to care, regardless of their ability to pay. If sequestration is allowed to continue, the nursing profession faces severe constraints in its ability to meet the healthcare needs of our nation.

In addition, sequestration threatens the development of groundbreaking research. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the beacon for discoveries that change the way care is delivered and improve health worldwide. As one of the 27 institutes comprising NIH, the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) focuses on improving disease prevention and wellness promotion, which are essential in the national effort to reduce healthcare expenditures. Further budget cuts would disrupt the critical work put forth by NIH and NINR, thus limiting innovative progress.

Our organizations recognize the difficult fiscal and political climates in which the Committee must work. However, funding cuts to nursing education and research would have a detrimental impact on America’s nurses, the healthcare system, and ultimately our patients. We urge you to view our Nursing Community sequestration factsheet for further examples of how these across-the-board cuts would limit the number of nurses and nursing students supported through the Title VIII programs and stunt developments in healthcare research. If our organizations can be of assistance, or if you have any questions, please contact convener of the Nursing Community Dr. Suzanne Miyamoto at SMiyamoto@aacn.nche.edu or 202-463-6930, ext. 247.
Sincerely,

CC:
Sen. Ron Wyden  
Sen. Bill Nelson  
Sen. Debbie Stabenow  
Sen. Bernie Sanders  
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse  
Sen. Mark Warner  
Sen. Jeff Merkley  
Sen. Chris Coons  
Sen. Tammy Baldwin  
Sen. Tim Kaine  
Sen. Angus King  
Sen. Jeff Sessions  
Sen. Charles Grassley  
Sen. Mike Enzi  
Sen. Mike Crapo  
Sen. Lindsey Graham  
Sen. Rob Portman  
Sen. Pat Toomey  
Sen. Ron Johnson  
Sen. Kelly Ayotte  
Sen. Roger Wicker  
Rep. Tom Cole  
Rep. Tom Price  
Rep. Diane Black  
Rep. James Clyburn  
Rep. Chris Van Hollen  
Rep. Nita Lowey