

NACNEP

National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice

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*Interim Chair and Designated
Federal Official*

May 17, 2023

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chair, Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Ranking Member, Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy
and Commerce
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Secretary Becerra, Chair Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, Chair McMorris Rodgers, and Ranking Member Pallone:

As the interim chair of the National Advisory Council on Nurse Education and Practice (NACNEP, or the Council), I am writing to express the Council's full support for the Future Advancement of Academic Nursing (FAAN) Act ([S.246/H.R.851](#)). This Act would extend the authority of the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide grant funding to enhance and modernize schools of nursing and increase the numbers of nurse faculty, thereby expanding the capacity to educate more nursing students. This new investment is needed to meet current and projected nursing workforce demands and prepare more nurses to provide for the health needs of the United States population. The FAAN Act addresses many recommendations from the Council to the HHS Secretary and Congress, as well as the mission and priorities of HRSA to improve health care access in underserved communities.

The nation faces a critical shortage of nurses, especially on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on practicing nurses, nurse faculty, and the preparation of students who represent the next generation of nurses. As NACNEP noted in its 18th Report (2023), [Preparing the Nursing Workforce for Future Public Health Emergencies](#), the COVID-19 pandemic "highlighted the central role of the nursing profession in the nation's emergency response – registered nurses (RNs) adapted to rapidly elevating risks and changing workplace demands to provide care and promote safety, while advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) demonstrated remarkable adaptability and flexibility in taking on expanded roles in a crisis ... the nursing workforce must remain well-prepared to respond during all public health emergencies." However, many RNs are leaving or have left the profession due to stress, overwork, and burnout from the pandemic and related, long-standing health system issues.

The pandemic also revealed the lack of investment in public health infrastructure in general, and public health nursing in particular. This underfunding has placed enormous stress on the current nursing workforce, as well as nursing faculty and students. Broadening the pathways for nurses to enter public health practice requires strengthening the capacity of both faculty and clinical preceptors in the areas of public health and population health, expanding the number of nurses prepared to address public health needs, and supporting resilience among the current workforce, new learners, nurse educators, and faculty and preceptors.

NACNEP has previously examined the critical nurse faculty shortage. The Council's 17th Report (2021), [*Preparing Nurse Faculty, and Addressing the Shortage of Nurse Faculty and Clinical Preceptors*](#), identified several key factors hampering the supply of nurse faculty, including non-competitive salaries, high workloads, poor understanding and respect for the faculty role, and a lack of diversity in the nurse faculty workforce. The report provided several recommendations to support the preparation of nurse faculty and clinical preceptors, improve faculty recruitment and retention, and develop new teaching methods. The FAAN Act would help achieve these goals.

NACNEP further notes that the provisions of the FAAN Act would instruct HRSA to prioritize grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions, as well as schools located in medically underserved communities and in designated health professional shortage areas. In its 2021 report, [*The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity*](#), the National Academy of the Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine called for efforts to diversify the nursing workforce and broaden access to health care. In addition, the Nursing Community Coalition, a group of over 60 professional nursing organizations, stated in its May 8, 2023, [letter to Congress](#) "the FAAN Act would provide ... vital resources to support the needs of nursing students, help retain and hire diverse faculty, modernize nursing education infrastructure, and create and expand clinical education opportunities."

NACNEP is a federal advisory committee charged with providing advice and recommendations to the Secretary and Congress on the administration of Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, including the range of issues relating to nurse workforce, nurse supply, education, and practice improvement. Providing advice on the FAAN Act falls within NACNEP's advisory purview.

NACNEP supports the FAAN Act, currently under consideration by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee and the House Subcommittee on Health. New authority provided through the FAAN Act would serve to support funding to improve the preparation of nursing students, diversify the nursing workforce and nursing faculty, broaden health care access, and promote health equity. The Council urges Congress to act swiftly to pass this bill, providing support for the current nursing workforce and much-needed investment in the preparation of the next generation of nursing students. The members of NACNEP stand ready to provide more information as needed.

Sincerely,

/s/

Justin Bala-Hampton, DNP, MPH, MHA, RN, AGACNP-BC, AOCNP
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