



October 13, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray, Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on
Deficit Reduction
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling, Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on
Deficit Reduction
129 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray and Representative Hensarling,

On behalf of the 44 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community, we write to request your thoughtful consideration of discretionary spending that supports America's health and the education of our healthcare providers. The Nursing Community is a forum of national professional nursing associations committed to promoting America's health through nursing care, and we believe it necessary to avoid detrimental cuts to federal programs that support workforce growth in a time of high demand for health care and healthcare providers. Understanding fully the difficult choices facing the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, we respectfully wish to emphasize the critical importance of healthcare and education funding.

As you are aware, the demand for healthcare services is expected to intensify as the Baby Boomer generation continues to age, a large sector of the nursing workforce retires, and more Americans seek nursing services. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects of the need for more than 581,000 new Registered Nurse (RN) positions by 2018, a 22% increase in the nursing workforce. Additionally, in June 2011, *Wanted Analytics* reported that employers and staffing agencies posted more than 121,000 new job ads for RNs in May, up 46% from May 2010. Moreover, according to the *August 2011 Employment Situation* released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "...health care employment rose by 30,000 in August. Ambulatory health care services and hospitals added 18,000 and 8,000 jobs, respectively. Over the past 12 months, health care employment has grown by 306,000." The demand for RN services will continue to rise into the foreseeable future, and we must take steps now to maintain a robust nursing workforce.

The critical need for healthcare providers must weigh into your deliberations. The work of the Super Committee to address our national debt in a bipartisan manner is to be commended, and we sincerely appreciate the dedication that you and the other committee members have made in forming sound recommendations for our nation in advance of the November 23 report deadline. During those deliberations, the Nursing Community asks that you keep in mind the invaluable contributions made by programs funded through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

For example, the Nursing Workforce Development programs authorized under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.), support the recruitment, education, and retention of more than 347,000 nurses and nursing students as well as numerous academic nursing institutions

and healthcare facilities between FY 2006 and FY 2009. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and RNs rely upon Title VIII support to complete their degrees and offset their considerable educational expenses. Programs like Title VIII will be essential in the coming years as the demand for nursing services intensifies.

Another example of critical HHS spending is on health research. Research-based initiatives that improve acute care outcomes and promote preventative health awareness hold the key to reducing healthcare spending and promoting sustainable practices, which are at the heart of nursing science. The National Institute of Nursing Research, one of the 27 institutes and centers of the National Institutes of Health, sets goals to promote health, prevent disease, eliminate health disparities, and improve quality of life, which over the last 25 years has made a lasting impact on the lives of millions of Americans.

Finally, Nurse-Managed Health Clinics (NMHC), funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration, are managed by APRNs and provide primary care and wellness services to underserved or vulnerable populations. These important care delivery sites are associated with a school, college, university or department of nursing, federally qualified health center, or independent nonprofit health or social services agency. The care provided at NMHCs directly contributes to positive health outcomes and savings in the long term.

The members of our organizations and the millions of nurses throughout the country provide life-saving care to patients and families each and every day. To meet the demand for nursing care and improve quality of care, we believe funding for HHS programs is critical and appreciate the Super Committee's consideration of the role they play in our nation's health as well as the economy. Crippling cuts to HHS programs would negatively impact the sustainability and improvement of our healthcare system. Thank you again for your efforts to reach sound decisions in this time of financial uncertainty.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Assembly for Men in Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Holistic Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators

Association of PeriOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
International Association of Forensic Nurses
International Nurses Society on Addictions
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
National American Arab Nurses Association
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Black Nurses Association
National Gerontological Nursing Association
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society

cc: Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.)
Rep. Dave Camp (R-Mich.)
Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.)
Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.)
Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.)
Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio)
Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.)
Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.)
Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.)

Speaker John Boehner
Majority Leader Eric Cantor
Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
Minority Whip Steny Hoyer

Majority Leader Harry Reid
Majority Whip Richard Durbin
Minority Leader Mitch McConnell