

Testimony of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS)
Prepared for the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) &
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Submitted by Brenda Nevidjon, ONS Chief Executive Officer
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The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) is a professional organization representing the interests of over 100,000 registered nurses and other healthcare providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. ONS members are a diverse group of professionals who represent a variety of professional roles, practice settings, and subspecialty practice areas. As leaders in the healthcare arena, oncology nurses are committed to continuous learning and leading the transformation of cancer care by advocating for high quality care for people with cancer. Oncology nurses are privileged to support people with cancer through the entire cancer experience, from diagnosis and treatment into survivorship or as they face their end-of-life journey. As such, they provide a unique perspective on improving cancer care and prevention. On behalf of its members, ONS respectfully requests the following related to the Department of Health and Human Services:

\$350 million for the Title VIII Workforce Development Programs. Now more than ever, it is essential that communities across the nation have access to safe, high- quality nursing care. For over five decades, the Title VIII programs have been helping to train our nation’s nursing workforce. The programs bolster nursing education at all levels, from entry- level preparation through graduate study, and support academic institutions and the nurse faculty who prepare today’s nursing students to be tomorrow’s expert clinicians. Title VIII Nursing Workforce and Development Programs connect patients with nursing care across a variety of settings, including community health centers, hospitals, and schools of nursing. For example, in Academic Year 2021-2022 the Title VIII Advanced Nurse Education Programs supported more than 8,800 students. In fact, Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) Program grantees partnered with more than 2,000 training sites in primary care settings, medically underserved communities, and rural communities. Additionally, 83 percent of new nurse practitioners worked in medically underserved communities and/or rural areas after completing a HRSA-funded nurse practitioner residency or fellowship. Together, Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs serve a vital need and help to ensure that we have a robust nursing workforce that is prepared to respond to public health threats and ensure the health and safety of all Americans. With more than four and half million nurses throughout the country, we strongly urge historic support for these programs in FY 2025.

\$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Research supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has resulted in revolutionary, cutting-edge treatment for cancer and other diseases and conditions, saving both lives and costs to the healthcare system. Continued, bold support for biomedical research holds the key to revolutionary new avenues of research that holds the promise for new early screenings devices and new treatments for disease. Additionally, because more than 80 percent of NIH’s research grants go to local institutions across the country, every \$1 of NIH funding generates around \$2.21 in local economic growth. However, discovery and innovation work best when funding is predictable and stable. Increased funding for NIH saves lives, fuels job growth and ensures our nation’s global competitiveness.

\$7.9 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Between FY2013 and FY2022, the number of grant applications received by the National Cancer Institute rose by 45 percent, compared to 20 percent at all other Institutes at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This demand for NCI funding reflects the extraordinary progress that is being made in many areas of cancer research, the lack of progress for some cancers, and the potential for new breakthroughs. With increased funding, NCI can advance the Cancer Moonshot goal of reducing the death rate from cancer by 50 percent over the next 25 years by funding hundreds of more research proposals, enrolling more people in clinical trials, and seizing opportunities for progress in key areas of research.

\$198 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As one of the 27 Institutes and Centers at the NIH, the NINR's goal is to lead nursing research to solve pressing health challenges and inform practice and policy to advance patient-centered care across the life continuum. NINR's nurse scientists' work is essential to developing new evidence-based practices to care for all patients. Increased federal investment allows for continued vital work at the forefront of disease prevention, patient care and recovery. As Americans live longer, high quality nursing care is vital to promoting the wellbeing of the nation.

\$12.5 million for the National Institute of Aging (NIA) for the trans-Institute, multi-disease Consortium for Palliative Care Research Across the Lifespan. Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. Palliative care is appropriate at any age and any stage in a serious illness (ideally made available to patients with serious illnesses upon diagnosis) and can be provided along with curative treatment. By focusing on priorities that matter most to patients and their families, palliative care has been shown to improve both quality of care and quality of life during and after treatment. Furthermore, palliative care reduces hospital utilization and results in overall cost savings. Yet, despite the demonstrated benefits of palliative care, there remain millions of Americans who are unable to access such services. We also ask the Committee to include the following language as part of the report to accompany the FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations:

***Palliative Care Research.* —The Committee provides \$12,500,000 for NIA to coordinate the work of the Consortium for Palliative Care Research Across the Lifespan, including developing early and mid-stage researchers, and engaging various healthcare systems, providers, and community partners. The Committee recognizes that palliative care is a critical area of research and informs supportive care for patients of all ages with serious illness and their families focused on relief of symptoms and suffering, communication of prognosis and treatment options in the context of patient goals, and coordination of care within and across healthcare settings.**

On behalf of the more than 100,000 oncology nurses in the United States, thank you for the opportunity to submit these requests. We look forward to working with you to transform cancer care and prevention throughout the country. For more information, please contact Jaimie Vickery, ONS Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy, at jvickery@ons.org.