

**ASSURING QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR THE UNITED STATES:
Building and Sustaining an Adequate Supply of Nurses****Consensus Document**

The ANSR Alliance requests at least \$205 Million in FY 2005 to fund the Nursing Workforce Development Programs – Title VIII of the *Public Health Service Act* – under the Health Resources and Services Administration. Americans for Nursing Shortage Relief (ANSR) represents a diverse cross section of healthcare and professional organizations, healthcare providers, and friends of nursing that have united to address the ever-growing nursing shortage. The Alliance and the nation's 2.7 million registered and advanced practice registered nurses (RNs and APRNs) believe Congress must implement a comprehensive set of initiatives to increase the nursing workforce and enhance the status of the profession. The *Consensus Document* outlines the Alliance's plan to effectively deal with the complex factors contributing to today's nurse and nursing faculty shortages.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES**❖ Expanding the Pipeline**

Efforts to stem the nursing shortage must include an expansion of the student pipeline across the breadth of the profession. Students of basic nursing, advanced practice nursing, and nursing faculty are *all* critically necessary to sustain an adequate supply of registered nurses available to deliver health care.

❖ Education and Advancement

Opportunities to pursue advanced nursing degrees and positions of autonomy and decision making are essential to moving the nursing profession forward and ensuring the retention of nurses in the healthcare workforce.

❖ Quality Patient/Client Care

The delivery of quality healthcare by a sufficient number of registered nurses is the goal of the nursing profession. Developing solutions to the nursing shortage brings the nation an important step closer to ensuring that all Americans have access to high quality professional nursing care.

IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES**❖ Improve Existing Programs**

The nursing community, including basic and advanced nursing organizations, is united in its request for **at least \$205 Million in FY 2005 to fund current Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs** in order to provide a minimum response to the needs being generated by the national nurse and nursing faculty shortages.

▪ Fully develop the National Nurse Corps.

The National Nurse Corps provides registered nurses to the nation's urban centers, rural areas, underserved communities, and regions that are experiencing shortages. All qualified health facilities – for-profit and non-profit, public and private – should be eligible to participate in this program. Mechanisms and incentives should be explored to allow National Nurse Corps recipients to easily enter into the Public Health Service Nurse Corps or other uniformed services. **(Authorization included in the *Nurse Reinvestment Act*, P.L. 107-205.)**

- **Support Nursing Internship/Residency Programs – Section 831, Title VIII.**
 These grants fund specialty and advanced practice internship/residency programs for post-degree recipients to meet the current and increasing demands for nurses with specialized training. The funds are available to profit and non-profit, public or private hospitals, academic institutions, and community-based health care settings to provide internship/residency programs for certain specialty-care and community settings, such as labor and delivery, emergency departments, operating rooms, home health care, nursing homes, public health departments, and community health centers. **(Authorized in the *Nurse Reinvestment Act*, P.L. 107-205.)**
- **Increase Funding for Title VIII Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs – Section 846.**
 With the passage of the *Nurse Reinvestment Act* in 2002, a national response occurred with significant numbers of people seeking these scholarships and loans. Without sufficient funds, many potential nurses and faculty are being turned away for lack of adequate funding in these programs.
- **Establish a fast-track nursing faculty scholarship and loan program – Section 846, Title VIII.**
 To allow full-time study and rapid completion of doctoral studies, it is essential that scholarships, loans, and monthly stipends be made available to registered nurses and masters' students. **(Authorization for a loan program included in the *Nurse Reinvestment Act*, P.L. 107-205.)**
- **Create New Clinical Career Path Enhancement within the Profession – Section 811, Title VIII.**
 It is critical to enhance the participation of registered nurses in a variety of advanced practice nurse clinical career tracks. These tracks would include, but not be limited to, nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse anesthetists at the masters and doctoral levels. Preparation in these areas is often a precursor to entrance into faculty positions.
- **Fund Section 846 of Title VIII Scholarship and Loan Repayment.**
 Section 846 - Loan Repayment has been enhanced with the addition of scholarships. All qualified health facilities – for-profit and nonprofit, public and private – are eligible to participate in this program. **(Authorized in the *Nurse Reinvestment Act*, P.L. 107- 205.)**
- **Bolster Minority Nurse Initiatives**
 To enhance the retention of minority nurses, additional funding needs to be provided. All qualified health facilities – for-profit and nonprofit, public and private – should be eligible to participate in this program. Although authority for scholarships and stipends for disadvantaged nursing students is authorized by **Section 821 of Title VIII**, due to current *Nurse Education Act* funding levels, only stipends have been awarded.
- **Authorize and fund the Nursing Student Loan (NSL) Program, Section 836 of the *Public Health Service Act*.**
 This program operates on a \$2 million revolving account funded through loan repayments, and has not received new funding since the 1980s. All qualified health facilities – for-profit and nonprofit, public and private – should be eligible to participate in this program.

❖ **New Initiatives**

- **Expand the *Health Professions Education Partnerships Act of 1998* – Title VIII of the *Public Health Service Act* – to ensure an adequate, highly trained nurse workforce for the United States.**
 A critical shortage of nursing faculty across the Nation is greatly limiting the ability of schools and universities to increase their enrollments in nursing programs. Sections 811 and 831 need to be expanded to include faculty development and mentoring in order to increase student enrollments.
- **Create tax incentives to increase the pipeline supply of nurses.**
 (a) **Employer-based** – Employers should be encouraged to adopt supportive policies for non-RNs to attend

an entry-level nursing program and for RNs who wish to attain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or advanced degree in clinical areas.

(b) Students

1. Tax credits for each year of school successfully completed should be provided to individuals who enroll in Associate Degree (AD), BSN, Masters or Doctoral education programs leading to a nursing faculty or practice area. Such credit would differ for the type of education level selected (AD, BSN, advanced degree programs).
2. All scholarship and loan repayment monies provided to nursing students should be tax exempt at any educational level.

❖ **Partnering with Agencies and Community: Thinking Outside the Box**

▪ **Department of Labor (DOL)**

Create initiatives centered at DOL to attract and retain people to the nursing profession and to designate a national labor shortage in nursing. Such an effort would include, but not be limited to, providing funds for career option education – including support for re-entry into nursing or second career transitional programs – and funds and assistance for career mobility.

▪ **Department of Education**

Amend the *Higher Education Act of 1965* to provide loan forgiveness and loan cancellation programs for nurses in exchange for working either in a clinical setting or at an accredited school of nursing.

▪ **Office of Minority Health, Department of Health and Human Services**

Develop a collaborative outreach model with nursing organizations (including specialty associations) and schools and universities to enhance minority recruitment and retention in the nursing field.

▪ **Technology in the Patient Care Environment**

Establish and fund grants to support the development of information infrastructures that will enhance the clinical education of nurses.

▪ **Community-Nurse Outreach Grants**

Provide public-private partnership funding for grants that assist communities in designing innovative programs to recruit and retain nurses at all levels of preparation. All qualified health facilities – for-profit and nonprofit, public and private – should be eligible to participate in this program.

▪ **Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Expansion Program**

Enhance recruitment and retention of nurses, especially in rural settings, through expansion of statutory authority allowing AHECs to work with communities and schools of nursing to develop models of excellence for advanced practice nurses, school nurses, public health nurses, perinatal outreach nurses, and other community-based nurse providers. In addition, AHECs could expand their school-mentoring program to include a nurse-mentoring program with an emphasis on grades 6-12.

▪ **Nurse-Managed Health Centers (NMHC)**

Expand Section 330 (e) (1) of the *Public Health Service Act* to allow nurse-managed health centers to become federally qualified health centers. NMHCs provide primary care to the uninsured and underserved population and should be allowed to have nursing students and faculty rotate through nursing centers allowing an excellent clinical experience for students and faculty.

❖ Research Initiatives

- **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**
Designate a research portfolio, in collaboration with professional nurse organizations, on nurse staffing mix, educational preparation, workplace conditions, leadership components in various settings to provide optimal care, and on community-based nurse providers and nurse-managed health centers.
- **National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)**
Increase funding to support nurse research on the cost effectiveness of different nursing practices on patient outcomes. Such research would allow nursing practice to be refined and help ensure the provision of quality patient care in its current challenging environment.
- **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**
Expand the Nurse Education Act and collaborate with related HRSA departments, boards of nursing, related state agencies, and professional nursing organizations. Augment funding and expand legislative authority to ensure an increase in the timeliness and frequency of data collection on the nurse workforce to better develop a national nursing workforce model. Promote coordination with state and regional data collection workforce planning activities.

The undersigned organizations endorse the Consensus Document as a basis for public policy to ensure quality health care for the Nation through the provision of an adequate supply of nurses and nurse faculty.

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Radiological Nurses Association
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
American Society of Plastic Surgical Nurse
Association of Faculties of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners
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
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association
Emergency Nurses Association
International Society of Nurses in Genetics, Inc.

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Massage Therapists
National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Black Nurses Association
National Conference of Gerontological Nurse
Practitioners
National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.
National Gerontological Nursing Association
National League for Nursing
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.
North American Transplant Coordinators Organization
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates
Society of Otorhinolaryngology and Head-Neck Nurses
Society of Pediatric Nurses
Society of Trauma Nurses
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society

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