March 18, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the oldest nursing organization in the United States, the National League for Nursing (NLN) respectfully urges the subcommittee to allocate $266 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Title VIII nursing workforce development programs in fiscal year (FY) 2020. The NLN promotes excellence in nursing education to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce to advance the health of the nation and the global community. The League represents more than 1,200 nursing schools, 40,000 members, and 25 regional constituent leagues.

The Title VIII nursing workforce development programs provide the main federal funding for the training of nurses to improve access to, and quality of, health care in underserved areas. These programs are fundamental to the infrastructure delivering quality, cost-effective health care. Data show that Title VIII program grantees enter practice in a medically underserved community or health professions shortage area, helping to increase access to services in rural and urban underserved communities. We appreciate the subcommittee’s past support of the Title VIII nursing workforce development programs.

A high quality-nursing workforce equals high quality care for the nation. With 4.8 million active, licensed vocational/practical nurses (LVNs/LPNs) and registered nurses (RNs), nurses are the primary professionals delivering quality health care in the nation (NCSBN 2019). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the RN workforce is projected to grow by 15 percent from 2016 to 2026, The BLS also estimates the LVN/LPN workforce will grow by 12 percent, the advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) workforce will grow by 31 percent, and the need for nursing faculty will grow 24 percent during the same period (BLS 2017).

While we understand the challenging fiscal decisions you must make, these decisions must ensure our nation prepares the next generation of nurses to provide quality care to all well into the 21st century. We urge you to provide $266 million for HRSA’s Title VIII nursing workforce development programs in FY 2020. If the NLN can be of any
assistance or should you have any questions, please contact Christine Murphy, the NLN’s director of public policy and advocacy, at cmurphy@nln.org or 202-909-2533.

Sincerely,

Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer

CC: Senator Richard Shelby
    Senator Lamar Alexander
    Senator Lindsey Graham
    Senator Jerry Moran
    Senator Shelley Moore Capito
    Senator John Kennedy
    Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith
    Senator Marco Rubio
    Senator James Lankford
    Senator Richard Durbin
    Senator Jack Reed
    Senator Jeanne Shaheen
    Senator Jeff Merkley
    Senator Brian Schatz
    Senator Tammy Baldwin
    Senator Chris Murphy
    Senator Joe Manchin