Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the National League for Nursing (NLN) before the Committee on the Future of Nursing 2020-2030. I am Dr. Rumay Alexander, NLN President and associate vice-chancellor and chief diversity officer and professor at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. As the oldest nursing organization in the United States, 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.

Today I would like to focus my testimony on key areas the NLN encourages the committee to consider as it updates the Future of Nursing report. My testimony will focus on transforming nursing education, care of vulnerable populations – a part of population health, innovation in simulation and technology, and the advancement of the science of nursing education.
Transforming nursing education

The League continues to promote nursing education as an advanced practice role and was the first national nursing organization to assert that the nurse educator role requires specialized preparation and developed core competencies for the nurse educator. The NLN also developed the academic nurse educator certification (CNE) a decade ago to establish nursing education as a specialty area of practice. While different doctoral programs will emphasize practice, research, and education to varying extents, it is imperative that all doctoral programs prepare nurse educators to teach in both academic and practice environments.

The NLN vision is to act as a catalyst to strengthen nursing education’s capacity to prepare nurses for the development of viable, comprehensive and culturally appropriate care in a global context. As nursing education is charged with the responsibility to prepare nurses to enter a workforce that is complex, uncertain, and constantly evolving, the NLN recognizes that a critical goal for the future is to endorse academic progression options for all nurses. The licensed practical/vocational (LPN/LVN) workforce addresses a significant voice in the health care provider continuum as they provide safe, quality patient-centered, evidence-based care to vulnerable groups across the health care
spectrum. The League calls for a timely and inclusive way to support and work with our LPN/LVN colleagues.

Care of Vulnerable Populations—A Part of Population Health

The NLN believes that nurses provide services from the cradle to the grave and that the quality of care should not be determined by one’s zip code or community. Diversity and safe, quality health care are inseparable. Diversity encourages self-awareness and respect for all persons as well as encompasses organizational, institutional, and system-wide behaviors in nursing, nursing education, and practice. It is imperative that all institutional leaders create academic environments where diverse faculty, staff, and students can flourish. There must be a willingness to challenge implicit and explicit bias including institutional racism that promotes micro-inequities and microaggressions, which act as barriers to achieve diversity in nursing and nursing education.

Nurses, on the frontlines of healthcare, are uniquely positioned to assess for social determinants of health and positively address health equity. Nurses can lead the nation in strategies to promote health equity and embrace this new
leadership role through the use of interprofessional collaboration, advocacy, political involvement, and community partnerships.

From pre-conception to aging populations, the environment is a contributor in health and illness. Climate change highlights the critical need for us to consider the consequences of these environmental changes on health. It is essential that nurses responsibly recognize and address the environmental hazards that might affect themselves, their patients, and the community at large. The NLN supports the integration of environmental health policy into nursing education, practice, and research.

**Innovation in Simulation and Technology**

Teaching with and about emerging technology is the future of nursing education. Providing nursing care in a highly technological, connected work environment is the future of nursing practice. Nursing curricula and teaching strategies need to teach with and about technology to better inform health care interventions that improve health care outcomes and prepare the nursing workforce. Through corporate partnerships and collaborations with other providers, nurse educators
play a vital role in preparing our nation’s diverse nursing workforce to enhance patient care outcomes in a shifting health care environment.

**Advancement of the Science of Nursing Education**

Advancement of the science of nursing education is foundational to excellence in nursing education; the process of teaching and learning must be informed by research. The NLN supports the policies and practices necessary to acquire the skill, passion, and capacity to build a scientific body of knowledge that enhances all types of nursing education programs and ultimately improves patient, family, and community outcomes. The NLN has developed research priorities in nursing education to close the gap between education and practice and promote the role of nurses as scientists. The NLN advocates for stronger collaborative partnerships between education and practice to enhance positive patient outcomes.

Thank you again for providing the NLN with the opportunity to present public comments to the committee and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.