May 13, 2009

The Honorable Lois Capps
United States House of Representatives
1110 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0523

Dear Representative Capps:

The undersigned organizations thank you for introducing the Nurse Managed Health Clinic Investment Act of 2009 and commend you on your support of Nurse-Managed Health Clinics (NMHCs). Nurse practitioners and nurse-managed health clinics have the potential to expand access to primary and preventative care for millions of patients, particularly vulnerable and underserved populations, across the nation. Due to a lack of funding, this potential remains largely untapped.

Expanding health insurance coverage is a top priority of the new administration, but unless access to qualified community-based providers is also increased, newly covered individuals will continue to face barriers to health care. NMHCs are cost-effective and affordable, thus they are perfectly positioned to strengthen the health care safety net and meet the increased demand for providers. These clinics provide primary care, disease prevention, and health promotion wellness services to patients regardless of their ability to pay. NMHCs reinforce the medical home concept by providing a critical first level of care for vulnerable populations with limited access to physicians and other primary care providers. By offering primary care in easily accessible community-based settings, NMHCs help eliminate unnecessary emergency room visits. As well, the range of wellness programs offered through these clinics help to teach those coping with chronic illnesses effective self-management techniques that can lessen the impact of these diseases.

Another important role of NMHCs is to serve as critically-needed clinical practice sites for undergraduate and graduate nursing students. Having a sufficient number of clinical practice sites in which nursing students can have access to the community increases the recruitment and retention of nursing students and faculty. Unfortunately, despite their tremendous benefits, these clinics continue to struggle because of unstable funding and reimbursement bases.

The Nurse Managed Health Clinic Investment Act of 2009 addresses the problems by creating a grant program to support NMHCs. This important legislation will help to ensure that working families across the country can get the care they need. We sincerely appreciate your willingness to support this legislation and look forward to working with you and your staff. For more information please contact Brian Valdez at (215) 731-7146 or brianv@nncc.us

Sincerely,

The American Academy of Ambulatory Nurses

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
The American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American Nurses Association
The American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
The Association of Faculties of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Emergency Nurses Association
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
The Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Institute for Nursing Centers
International Society of Nurses in Genetics
The Legislative Coalition of Virginia Nurses
The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
The National Association of Orthopaedic Nurses
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National League for Nursing
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
The National Student Nurses’ Association, Inc
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Nursing Centers Research Network
Oncology Nursing Society
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
RN First Assistants Policy & Advocacy Coalition
Virginia Council of Nurse Practitioners