

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 19, 2007

Dear Colleague:

We urge you to cosign the attached letter to Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Specter of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee concerning the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act). We respectfully request \$200 million for these critical authorities in Fiscal Year 2008.

Nursing Workforce Development programs are essential to address the nursing shortage and the distribution of registered nurses (RNs) into underserved communities. However, these programs are in jeopardy. This is the first year since this nursing shortage was initially noted in the late 1990s that the President has recommended a decrease in his FY 2008 budget proposal for nursing programs. This comes at a time when the nursing shortage has only continued to grow in depth and duration. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that more than 1.2 million new and replacement nurses will be needed by 2014.

Registered Nurses are the primary source of care and support for patients at the most vulnerable points in their lives. They provide vital nursing care for patients and their families in every aspect of our nation's health care delivery system from long-term care settings to the military. However, over the last nine years, the bottleneck in the nursing shortage has become more apparent as constraints in nursing education programs have intensified. The Health Resources and Services Administration's April 2006 report projected that nursing schools must increase the number of graduates by 90% in order to adequately address the nursing shortage. This proves to be difficult when schools of nursing turned away 42,866 qualified applications to baccalaureate and graduate programs in 2006 primarily due to a shortage of nurse faculty. Without additional funding, the nursing and nurse faculty shortage will continue to debilitate the quality of our health care delivery system.

Supporting these vital programs is a fundamental investment in the health and productivity of all Americans. We urge you to join us in this bipartisan effort to provide increased funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforces Development programs. Please call Keysha Brooks-Coley in Senator Mikulski's office (4-4654) or Priscilla Hanley in Senator Collin's office (4-2523) if you have any questions or would like to sign on to the letter.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator



Susan Collins
United States Senator