



July 10, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the 48 undersigned nursing organizations, we fundamentally believe that Congress and the Administration must act now to expand patients' access to affordable, high-quality healthcare coverage by reforming the current system. As a forum for professional nursing and related organizations that collaborate on a wide spectrum of issues, the Nursing Community understands the need to invest in a system that is patient-centered, comprehensive, affordable, accessible, and delivers the quality of care all people in America deserve. We are dedicated stakeholders in the efforts to transform our healthcare system and stand ready to work with Congress and the Administration to move our nation towards meaningful reform.

The 2.9 million Registered Nurses (RNs) in the United States are the largest group of healthcare professionals and are involved in every aspect of health care. RNs play an essential role in providing patients access to care in hospitals, clinics, community health centers, schools, ambulatory surgery centers, long term care facilities, and many other healthcare settings. Nurses provide health services that span the entire spectrum of care from prevention to hospice. *Nurses represent the public interest, not a special interest.* The contributions made by the practice and science of nursing are significant, and in collaboration with other healthcare professionals, can lead to positive change.

In recent months, Congress and the Administration have discussed specific changes to the system and highlighted the role nurses will play in implementing healthcare reform legislation. We agree that expanding the nursing workforce and enhancing the nursing educational system to increase student capacity is vitally important to ensuring patients have access to care. Also, the Nursing Community agrees with Congress' and the Administration's interest in developing a healthcare system where reimbursement is linked to quality health outcomes. We recognize that Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) already provide high quality, cost-effective care and understand that utilizing APRNs to their full scope of practice will cut costs while simultaneously increasing access. Furthermore, we are also interested in the efforts to create a strong prevention and wellness system through an investment in public health. While conversations are still occurring to ensure that nurses and APRNs are integral players in the reformed healthcare system, we are optimistic that these discussions will yield provisions that nurses can support.

Nurses are committed to the principle that all persons are entitled to readily accessible and affordable, quality healthcare services. Building the new healthcare environment requires drawing on the full complement of expertise gained from broad-based, inter-professional, and consumer partnerships. Nursing policy experts and leaders are available to further discuss healthcare reform. We hope that Congress and the Administration will continue their efforts towards reforming the healthcare system and work collaboratively with all vested stakeholders—including nurses—as we believe that the time for reform is now.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses  
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing  
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses  
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists  
American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators  
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses  
American College of Nurse Practitioners  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American Nurses Association  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses  
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses  
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses  
Dermatology Nurses' Association  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association  
Infusion Nurses Society  
International Association of Forensic Nurses  
International Society of Nurses in Genetics  
National American Arab Nurses Association  
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists  
National Association of Hispanic Nurses  
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Neonatal Nurses  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Registered Nurse First Assistants  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations  
National Nursing Centers Consortium  
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties  
National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.  
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Philippine Nurses Association of America, Inc  
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association  
Public Health Nursing Section, American Public Health Association  
Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations  
RN First Assistants Policy & Advocacy Coalition  
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates  
Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society