



November 18, 2024

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) appreciates the reinstatement of the Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB), established to advise and provide recommendations on the use of organizational authorities to respected agency officials. As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN represents more than 875 schools of nursing at private and public universities.¹ Our institutions educate more than 520,000 baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate students, and employ more than 57,000 faculty members who are scientists, educators, and practitioners.² We recognize how vital it is to prepare a highly educated nursing workforce, strengthen the foundation of nursing science, and advance solutions to meet the nation's healthcare needs. Having a nursing representative included at these federal conversations is imperative and why we strongly urge you to ensure nurses are represented and members of the SMRB.

Nurse scientists are leading work that is critical to reducing health disparities, improving health outcomes, advancing health policy, and providing leadership and education to the next generation of nurse researchers, educators, and clinicians. Currently, the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) is the only Institute or Center at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that has a director who is a nurse.³ Having the nursing lens represented on SMRB is essential, as it brings a unique perspective to your work, discussions, and solutions. Others within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has seen the value of nursing's voice firsthand as nurses serve as Co-Chair of the Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC)⁴ and on the National Advisory Council for Healthcare Research and Quality.⁵ Additionally, other entities such as the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) appointed an esteemed nursing professional.⁶ Having diverse perspectives and skill sets add important context to these patient-centered discussions and would be a significant addition to the mission and work of SMRB.

The representation of nurse scientists and researchers in all leadership roles within NIH is crucial. When looking at next steps, we strongly urge you to appoint at least one nurse to the SMRB to ensure the nurse scientists and researchers are heard. If we can be of any assistance in these

¹ American Association of Colleges of Nursing. About AACN. (2024) Retrieved from: <https://www.aacnnursing.org/About-AACN>

² Ibid.

³ National Institutes of Health (NIH). Directors of NIH Institutes and Centers. (2024) Retrieved from: <https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/directors-nih-institutes-centers>

⁴ Members: Physician-Focused Payment Model Technical Advisory Committee (2024) Retrieved from: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/collaborations-committees-advisory-groups/ptac/ptac-members>

⁵ The National Advisory Council (NAC) for Healthcare Research and Quality (2024) Retrieved from: <https://www.ahrq.gov/cpi/about/nac.html#Members>

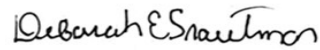
⁶ MedPAC Commission Members. (2024) Retrieved from: <https://www.medpac.gov/member>

endeavors, please contact AACN's Director of Government Affairs, Rachel Minahan at RMinahan@aacnnursing.org.

Sincerely,



Jean Giddens, PhD, RN, FAAN
Board Chair



Deborah E. Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc:

Monica M. Bertagnolli, MD, Director of the National Institutes of Health

Lawrence A. Tabak, DDS, PhD, Principal Deputy Director of the National Institutes of Health

Andrea Hayes Dixon, MD, Chair, Scientific Management Review Board at the National Institutes of Health