

December 18, 2024

Dear President-Elect Trump and Vice President-Elect Vance:

On behalf of the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing](https://www.aacnnursing.org/) (AACN), we congratulate you on your recent election and look forward to working with you as we address healthcare priorities impacting our country. As the national voice for academic nursing, AACN represents more than 875 member schools of nursing at private and public universities.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> As lifelong learners, our member schools are dedicated to developing a highly skilled nursing workforce, bolstering the scientific foundation for nursing practice, and promoting creative solutions to address the nation's constantly evolving healthcare demands.

With nursing as the nation's largest healthcare profession,<sup>3</sup> nursing schools, faculty, students, practitioners, and researchers are essential to addressing today's public health challenges, while preparing for the future. Given our unique expertise and vital role in academic nursing and preparing the nursing workforce, **AACN welcomes the opportunity to meet with your Administration regularly and strongly encourages prioritization of nursing's representation on each applicable federal taskforce, committee, and council.** Further, we recognize how instrumental investments to strengthen nursing education pathways and academic progression are to providing high-quality healthcare in all communities, including rural, underserved, and urban areas. Federal resources for all accredited schools of nursing to support baccalaureate, graduate, and post-graduate nursing programs are imperative to help prepare individuals for critical roles in administration, teaching, research, informatics, and direct patient care. As we contend with an aging population, address varying healthcare needs throughout the country, and promote a culture of wellness, now is the time to support nursing schools and the work to prepare future frontline providers.

While AACN is eager to learn more about how we can best support your Administration to help advance sound policy, we encourage the incoming administration to support academic nursing by advancing the following four priorities:

**Enhance the Connection between Higher Education and Nursing Practice:**

Higher education is critical to the success of nursing students in safely and effectively delivering high-quality, patient-centered care for all communities. Our nursing schools encourage collaboration, benefit the economy, promote innovation, and strengthen nursing education pathways. AACN recommends:

- Increasing support for schools of nursing, faculty, and students to ensure a strong supply of baccalaureate and graduate prepared nurses by sustaining and preserving federal student loan programs, such as the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, Pell Grants, Perkins Loan Program, and the Graduate PLUS Loan.
- Removing barriers to higher education to ensure equal opportunities for nursing students from all backgrounds, including those that have been historically underrepresented in higher education and the nursing workforce.

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Active RN Licenses (2024). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncsbn.org/nursing-regulation/national-nursing-database/licensure-statistics/active-rn-licenses.page>

- Supporting rigorous accreditation that ensures superior and effective educational programs without creating unnecessary regulatory burden to allow nursing students, academic institutions, and communities to flourish.

#### **Pursue Transformative Research Led by Nurse Scientists:**

Scientific discoveries by nurse researchers improve health, cure diseases, and yield immeasurable return on investment to the healthcare system, patient, and community. As we look at emerging technologies, such as leveraging AI, a balanced approach focusing on quality and patient-centered care remains paramount. AACN recommends:

- Re-emphasizing and elevating the vital importance of the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), where nurse scientists across the country investigate methods and examine relationships to improve public health, generate groundbreaking findings, address social determinants of health, and lead translational research.
- Expanding the scientific workforce through sustained and increased funding for nursing research and the education of future nurse scientists.
- Supporting nurse-led healthcare and health services research done by nurse scientists at the federal level to ensure that the healthcare system better supports patient outcomes and improves the overall health of the nation.

#### **Develop and Support a Robust Nursing Workforce:**

Fostering academic-practice partnerships improves nursing student learning, drives faculty and clinician collaboration, and creates a unique environment that focuses on high-quality and cost-effective patient- and family-centered care. AACN recommends:

- Increasing funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs, and other efforts to support baccalaureate and graduate nursing students who are future frontline providers, faculty, nurse preceptors, and researchers.
- Investing in programs that recruit individuals from all backgrounds to the nursing profession, facilitate retention, and promote career progression.
- Implementing nursing workforce policies and funding streams that reflect emerging trends focused on growth and quality in the healthcare system.
- Establish an emergency response and disaster preparedness pilot program to prepare the future generation of frontline nurses to respond to the next public health challenge.

#### **Improve the Health of our Nation Through Nursing Care:**

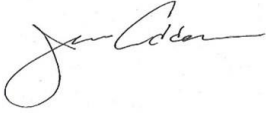
Supporting nurses' contributions and well-being positively impacts patient outcomes, strengthens the healthcare infrastructure, and increases the overall health of our nation. AACN recommends:

- Investing in networks of nurse-led/managed centers and clinics in which teams of healthcare professionals provide accessible population-based care in communities where people live, work, and play.
- Removing barriers to allow Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to practice to the full extent of their education and clinical training.
- Ensuring nurse experts are represented on all relevant federal taskforces, committees, and councils.

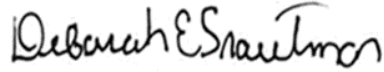
AACN stands ready to serve as a resource and vital stakeholder to your Administration. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our expertise, analysis, and experience as you address healthcare, higher education, and related policy issues impacting our nation. If AACN can be of any assistance, please contact Rachel Minahan, Director of Government Affairs, at [rminahan@aacnnursing.org](mailto:rminahan@aacnnursing.org) or Josh Adams, Director of

Policy and Regulatory Affairs, at [jadams@aacnnursing.org](mailto:jadams@aacnnursing.org). AACN looks forward to working with you throughout the transition and your Administration and would welcome the opportunity to meet with the transition team at the first opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jean Giddens".

Jean Giddens, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deborah E. Trautman".

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