

**Statement for the Record  
to the  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Health**

**Supporting Tomorrow's Health Providers:  
Examining Workforce Programs Under the  
Public Health Service Act**

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Burgess, Ranking Member Green, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer this statement for the record. The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) is the professional association for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and student registered nurse anesthetists, with membership that includes more than 50,000 CRNAs and student nurse anesthetists representing over 90 percent of the nurse anesthetists in the United States. CRNAs are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who personally administer more than 43 million anesthetics to patients each year in the United States. CRNAs provide acute, chronic, and interventional pain management services. In some states, CRNAs are the sole anesthesia providers in nearly 100 percent of rural hospitals, affording these medical facilities obstetrical, surgical, trauma stabilization, and pain management capabilities.

The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health's hearing, entitled "Supporting Tomorrow's Health Providers: Examining Workforce Programs Under the Public Health Service Act" comes at an important time. Title VIII programs play a critical role in ensuring that there are enough nurses to meet the demand of an ever growing healthcare system in America. They also guarantee that the nursing workforce is available to treat Americans in the most underserved areas of our country. The President's proposed budget for FY18 proposed deep and painful cuts to these programs. The House Appropriations Committee's proposed cuts of \$18.27 million and the consolidation of the Title VIII programs would also have a devastating impact on nursing education, the workforce, and the patients those nurses serve.

## **Future Nursing Workforce Needs**

The growth of the healthcare industry coupled with a growing and aging population is creating increased demand for nurses across the country. A recent U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) report looking at the supply and demand projections for the nursing workforce through 2030 projects a shortage in nurses in states across the U.S. with some states facing a possible deficit exceeding 10,000 nurses by 2030<sup>1</sup>. The nursing shortage is exacerbated by an increasingly aging nursing workforce population, which is more prone to an increase of retirements in the coming years.

The same HHS study gives a stark warning about the uneven nature of shortfalls that will exist in the nursing workforce in the coming years, stating "national estimates mask large geographic disparities in adequacy of supply." Title VIII funding plays a crucial role in ensuring that disparities in access to healthcare are addressed and remedied. Title VIII funding for Nursing Workforce Development enables many students to use their nursing education to move to and serve in rural and medically underserved areas. CRNAs in particular play a pivotal role in

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<sup>1</sup> US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, "Supply and Demand Projections of the Nursing Workforce: 2014-2030," (2017)  
[https://bhwa.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bhw/nchwa/projections/NCHWA\\_HRSA\\_Nursing\\_Report.pdf?utm\\_campaign=enews08172017&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://bhwa.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bhw/nchwa/projections/NCHWA_HRSA_Nursing_Report.pdf?utm_campaign=enews08172017&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

ensuring access to care for those living in rural and underserved areas. In FY 2011, the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship Program graduated 7,744 nursing students, of which 97% went on to medically underserved areas.

### **Ensuring Access to Healthcare**

Title VIII provides funding to a number of very important nursing workforce development programs, including Advanced Nursing Education, which contains the Nurse Anesthesia Traineeship funding, as well as the National Nurse Service Corps which incentivize nurses to practice in underserved areas. 73% of all CRNA programs report applying for federal funding under Title VIII to help recruit and train nurses. Of these requests, one hundred percent of programs report requesting Nurse Anesthetists Trainee Program funding, making it all the more critical that these funds continue to be available.

In many rural and underserved counties across America, CRNAs are the only anesthesia providers. Maintaining the availability of these services and ensuring a continuing flow of new CRNAs and nurses to our most vulnerable and underserved communities is critically important.

### **Conclusion**

Title VIII funding has been an integral part of our healthcare system for over 50 years. We encourage the continuation and expansion of these programs as an essential tool to ensure an adequate nursing workforce. CRNAs and many of our nursing community colleagues work in our nation's most underserved areas, and Title VIII funding helps to make those services a reality. While we understand that budget decisions are never easy, and Congress has tough choices to make to work towards balancing the budget, we urge you to help ensure America's health is a top priority by preserving funding for all of the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs, and supporting the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act of 2017.