

**Statement for the Record
American Nurses Association**

**Road to Recovery: Ramping up COVID-19 Vaccines, Testing, and Medical Supply Chain
House of Representatives, Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health
February 3, 2021**

The American Nurses Association (ANA) commends the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health for convening this hearing on the Road to Recovery: Ramping up COVID-19 Vaccines, Testing, and Medical Supply Chain, and thanks you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.

ANA is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 4.2 million registered nurses (RNs), through its state and constituent member associations, organizational affiliates, and individual members. ANA members also include the four advanced practice registered nurse roles (APRNs); nurse practitioners (NPs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs), certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs). ANA is dedicated to partnering with health care consumers to improve practices, policies, delivery models, outcomes, and access across the health care continuum.

Medical Supply Chain

Last year, ANA President Dr. Ernest Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN, testified before the Senate Finance Committee on a hearing entitled "Part 2: Protecting the Reliability of the U.S. Medical Supply Chain During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Dr. Grant provided the Committee with detailed recommendations ANA had submitted to former Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander and the HELP Committee in response to a white paper request. Below are some of the highlights of ANA's recommendations.

- To ensure health care providers are never again faced with a personal protective equipment (PPE) shortage, Congress should request an annual report on the state of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) with respect to PPE, vaccines, medicines, and other supplies. The report must include when items are expiring and what items need to be replaced. When items are approaching expiration, they should be offered to underserved medical facilities such as federally qualified health centers, rural hospitals, and clinics based on need.
- Health care facilities should be required to report monthly on their levels of these supplies so the agency in charge has up-to-date information on where shortages may be most acute in the early stages of an emergency. A formulary should be developed by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine on what levels of PPE, vaccines, and other supplies health care facilities should have in their own stockpiles. In addition, manufacturers of these items should also be reporting on production and capabilities.

- The federal government must take appropriate steps to plan coordination efforts. Many states do not have the resources or expertise to carry out preparations or coordination without federal assistance. Hospitals and facilities with more capital will likely benefit while rural and underserved areas will suffer. We need to ensure states are not pitted against each other when it comes to resources.
- The federal government needs to do more to incentivize and prioritize the manufacturing of PPE, medications, and other supplies in the United States, even if that means carrying out production itself. We cannot allow our citizens to be put at a health risk because businesses view manufacturing elsewhere better for their bottom line.

Vaccines

Vaccines are critical to the control and prevention of infectious disease transmission. This has been underscored as development and administration of COVID-19 vaccines is recognized as a critical component of addressing the ongoing pandemic. ANA has established key principles to guide nurses and other health care professionals' consideration for COVID-19 vaccines¹. The nursing workforce not only plays a vital role in educating the public but is integral to safe and effective administration of COVID-19 vaccines to other health care professionals and patients. In a letter sent on January 27, 2021 to Congressional Leadership, ANA requests continued federal investment in vaccine development, distribution, and administration.

Vaccine Equity

Ensuring the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines will be vital to ending the pandemic and building public confidence in vaccines for the future. According to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation study of early data from states collecting racial and ethnic demographic data, there is a disconnect between those who have received vaccinations and the makeup of those states' populations. The Kaiser report found that to date, vaccination patterns by race and ethnicity appear to be at odds with who the virus has affected the most.² Unfortunately, this data is not yet being collected by a majority of states. It will be necessary for states and localities to provide a clearer picture to inform efforts to mitigate the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people of color. Further, data is critical to understanding racial equity concerns in vaccination distribution plans and identifying any disparities that can be addressed through policies, changes in strategy, and education.

Conclusion

Thank you for giving nurses the opportunity to provide input on the need to ramp up COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and the medical supply chain. ANA stands ready to work with the Energy and Commerce Committee to find sustainable solutions regarding these vital mechanisms for getting the pandemic under control and getting our nation on the road to recovery. If you have questions,

¹ <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know/covid-19-vaccines/>

² <https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/early-state-vaccination-data-raise-warning-flags-racial-equity/>

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