



## International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

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March 20, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Ranking Leaders McCarthy and Pelosi,

Representing the interests of Psychiatric Nurses and Nurse Practitioner colleagues nationally and internationally, the International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses (ISPN) joins the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the National League for Nursing (NLN) to respectfully voice our concerns for the impending budget cuts proposed by President Trump.

Mental health has a significant impact on our friends, families, and colleagues. Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S (18.5%) experience mental illness in each year with serious mental illness costing America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year. Yet developing a workforce to address these issues continues to be a struggle. The current recommended proposal to Congress for (1) health professions and nursing workforce programs to be cut by \$403 million dollars and (2) the National Institutes of Health research to be cut by \$5.8 billion (20%) has staggering implications. This cut directly impacts access to healthcare in general but more specifically, mental health care. Mental health access especially in rural America is difficult if not impossible to meet the current needs. It causes hospital emergency rooms to become the first and primary stop for all illnesses. It is estimated that uncompensated care provided by hospitals in our communities may rise to the rate prior to the Affordable HealthCare Act of \$75 to \$125 billion.

The cut in funding for health professions and the nursing workforce directly works against the Administration's goal of increasing access and reducing healthcare costs. Nurses are being called upon to manage even more complex roles such as coordinating care providing preventive services, and managing chronic diseases through transitions of healthcare delivery, and with shrinking resources on state and local levels.

Currently, colleges are unable to recruit faculty to meet the needs for nursing education, thus limiting the number of students that can be admitted to the programs. Though the president's budget does not provide many details, eliminating \$403 million in health professions and nursing programs will certainly impact our ability to educate the next generation of nursing students and faculty. Supporting the growth of the nursing workforce to care for populations across the lifespan is an invaluable investment in ensuring high quality nursing care.

It is imperative to access federal funding to facilitate the delivery of high quality health care services to the greatest number of Americans through a skilled workforce from solid nursing education. ISPN stands ready to work with Congress as a constructive voice and positive force for improving health and mental health care delivery, coverage, and affordability for the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rene Love", with a large, stylized initial "R" that loops back.

Rene Love, PhD, DNP, PMHNP-BC, FNAP, FAANP  
President  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

cc: The Honorable Diane Black Chairman, House Budget Committee