



August 19, 2016

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for S. 3245, Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act of 2016

Dear Senator Merkley:

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), I write in support of S. 3245, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act. This bill would reauthorize, update and improve the Nursing Workforce Development Programs that help to grow and support the nation's nursing workforce.

The United States is experiencing a significant nursing shortage that is expected to continue well into the future. The increased demand for nurses projected in the coming years coupled with the aging of the nursing workforce will only exacerbate this shortage. For five decades, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs have helped build the supply and distribution of qualified nurses needed in all healthcare settings. The Title VIII programs bolster nursing education at all levels, from entry-level preparation through graduate study, and provide support for institutions that educate nurses for practice in rural and medically underserved communities.

ONS is a professional organization of over 39,000 registered nurses and other health care providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. We represent the health professionals involved in the administration and monitoring of chemotherapy and managing the associated side effects cancer patients may experience. The growing demand for cancer care, from prevention to palliative care, requires oncology nurses to play a pivotal and increasingly important role in delivering high quality, safe, effective and efficient health care to people affected by, or at risk for, cancer.

Oncology nurses represent a vital component of quality cancer treatment across the spectrum of care; however, the shrinking nurse workforce ultimately will result in fewer nurses who choose oncology nursing as a career, stay in oncology nursing, and become certified in oncology nursing. The quality of cancer care may be negatively impacted as a result.

Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs are a direct investment in the nursing workforce, patient well-being, and the sustainability of our nation's healthcare system, and ONS thanks you for your support of the nursing profession. We would be happy to discuss ways in which ONS may be of assistance in this endeavor, and would encourage you to contact Alec Stone, MA, MPA, ONS Director of Health Policy, at astone@ons.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan M. Schneider".

Susan Schneider, PhD, RN, AOCN®, FAAN
President
Oncology Nursing Society