



## AMERICAN ACADEMY of NURSING

April 4, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman  
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

On behalf of the American Academy of Nursing (Academy), I write in support of S. 3799, the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics Act (PREVENT Pandemics Act) introduced on March 10, 2022. The PREVENT Pandemics Act presents a clear path forward to make critical changes and improve public health preparedness capabilities for future emergencies such as COVID-19. The Academy serves the public by advancing health policy through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. Academy Fellows are inducted into the organization for their extraordinary contributions to improve health locally and globally. With more than 2,900 Fellows, the Academy represents nursing's most accomplished leaders in policy, research, administration, practice, and academia.

The Academy was pleased to provide comments<sup>1</sup> in response to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee's request for information regarding necessary preparations for future pandemics. We appreciate that many of the recommendations and considerations put forth in those comments have been incorporated into the PREVENT Pandemics Act. The Academy is encouraged to note that the bill specifically addresses health equity through the social determinants of health and tracking disparities in preparedness and response, in addition to outlining advancements in biosurveillance, public health data collection and coordination, federal and state preparedness, and the national stockpile. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academy's focus<sup>2</sup> has been centered on (1) protecting our most vulnerable populations; (2) supporting nurses and healthcare providers; (3) accelerating access to and education of COVID-19 vaccines; and (4) increasing access, speed, and accuracy of testing. These are crucial areas in need of attention as we navigate current and future challenges, and we are encouraged by the provisions in S. 3799 that would bring this focus to the forefront.

Moving forward with this legislation, we urge you to consider the critical role of telehealth in access to services. The Academy is a longstanding supporter of telehealth expansion to increase access to care,

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<sup>1</sup> American Academy of Nursing. (2020, June 26). *Letter to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Regarding Recommendations on Pandemic Preparedness*.

[https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/AANNET/c8a8da9e-918c-4dae-b0c6-6d630c46007f/UploadedImages/FINAL\\_AAN\\_HELP\\_Committee\\_Pandemic\\_Response.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/AANNET/c8a8da9e-918c-4dae-b0c6-6d630c46007f/UploadedImages/FINAL_AAN_HELP_Committee_Pandemic_Response.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> American Academy of Nursing. (2021, January 28). *American Academy of Nursing Applauds President Biden's Recent Executive Orders*. [https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/AANNET/c8a8da9e-918c-4dae-b0c6-6d630c46007f/UploadedImages/American\\_Academy\\_of\\_Nursing\\_Aplauds\\_President\\_Bidens\\_Recent\\_Executive\\_Orders.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/AANNET/c8a8da9e-918c-4dae-b0c6-6d630c46007f/UploadedImages/American_Academy_of_Nursing_Aplauds_President_Bidens_Recent_Executive_Orders.pdf)

especially to our most vulnerable populations. In the Academy's comments to the HELP Committee as well as to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in 2020<sup>3</sup>, we noted just how important telehealth has been in providing patients timely and safe care during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have encouraged CMS to continue to evaluate ways to expand telehealth access to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, while also noting the health equity challenge this poses as many patients and providers may not have access to reliable internet service, broadband speed, or devices with video capabilities. Greater investment in technological infrastructure and an expansion in telehealth policy are needed to ensure that all patients, regardless of location or other structural barriers, can access the care they need during times of health emergencies and beyond.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to supporting public health preparedness efforts. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact the Academy's Senior Director of Policy, Christine Murphy, at [cmurphy@aannet.org](mailto:cmurphy@aannet.org) or 202-777-1174.

Sincerely,



Suzanne Miyamoto, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>3</sup> American Academy of Nursing. (2020, October 5). *Comments on the FY 2021 Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule*. [https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/AANNET/c8a8da9e-918c-4dae-b0c6-6d630c46007f/UploadedImages/FINAL\\_CMS\\_Response\\_Letter\\_Draft.pdf](https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/AANNET/c8a8da9e-918c-4dae-b0c6-6d630c46007f/UploadedImages/FINAL_CMS_Response_Letter_Draft.pdf)