March 25, 2020

Chairman Lamar Alexander  
HELP Committee  
US Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Bobby Scott  
Education and Labor Committee  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Alexander and Scott and Ranking Members Murray and Foxx:

On behalf of 56.6 million pre-kindergarten, elementary and high school students in the United States and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), I am writing to ask you to consider the financial support of both the physical and mental health of students. The recovery phase of the COVID-19 response will bring many challenges and mental health concerns for students now and in the 2020-2021 school year. Having support from school nurses will be crucial for students to achieve academic success. NASN urges Congress to fund up to 1,000 school nurses in schools. School nurses support the academic success of students by making sure they are healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

Today, children face more chronic and complex health conditions than ever before. School nurses are front line health care providers, serving as the bridge between the health care and education systems. School nurses engage school communities, parents, and healthcare providers to promote wellness and improve health outcomes for children. For many children living in or near poverty, the school nurse may be the only health care professional they have access to. School nurses are essential in infectious disease surveillance, identification and intervention for student physical and mental health concerns, health screenings, school located vaccinations and immunization compliance efforts. Access to a school nurse is a student equity issue.

As you and our other Congressional leaders negotiate stimulus packages centered on the COVID-19 pandemic, consider that 39 percent of public schools have a school nurse all day, every day, while another 35 percent of schools have a school nurse who works part-time in one or more schools, leaving 25 percent of schools without a fulltime school nurse. Healthy students learn better. When a school nurse is present to meet student healthcare needs, parents and school administrators know that children and youth can focus on learning.

During this crisis, school nurses serve students and families in schools and in communities. Thank you for your consideration to address the health, safety, and readiness to learn of students by increasing school nurse positions in U. S. schools. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance or put you in touch with NASN members from your local communities.

Sincerely,

Laurie Combe  
President