



Title VIII Funding May Not Be Finalized Until After November Election

Table with 5 columns: Program Name, FY 2006 Final, FY 2007 President's Request, FY 2007 House-Passed Bill, FY 2007 Senate Committee Mark Up. Rows include Total, Advanced Education Nursing, Comprehensive Geriatric Education, Loan Repayment and Scholarships, Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants, Nursing Faculty Loan Program, and Nursing Workforce Diversity.

What has turned out to be a dismal year for increases to Title VIII funding has now become a waiting game. Capitol Hill intelligence points to a hold on completing the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations process until after the November elections.

North Carolina Budget Proposals Address Nurse Shortage

According to Health Resources and Services Administration estimates, North Carolina will face a shortage of 18,000 nurses by 2020. To head off this shortage, Governor Mike Easley (D) and state legislators are pro-

posing to allocate money for college scholarships and training to get more instructors. While they disagree on some of the initiatives proposed, they do agree on spending to create a bachelor of science program in nursing at Appalachian State University and scholarships for low-income nursing students at community colleges.

The specific budget proposals agreed on thus far include expanding Area Health Education Centers statewide and spending \$500,000 in scholarships. The money for the scholarships would come from lottery revenues. As for the initiatives on which agreement has not yet been reached, the House proposal gives the (Cont'd page 2)

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state's community college system an additional \$1 million to spend on nursing programs; the Senate proposal earmarks an extra \$300,000 for regional health centers. Easley's budget proposal includes \$2.75 million for a graduate nurse scholarship program, but the House and Senate proposals whittle that amount to \$1.2 million.

The graduate scholarship program is to encourage more nurses to take on a teaching role. "One of the challenges we're seeing is recruiting enough faculty who are educationally prepared to teach," said Ned Fowler, dean of Allied Health and Public Service Education at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. "We're trying to find faculty with a master's degree who specialize in (nurse) education," Fowler said. "We're developing a program to make it more accessible for nurses to get a master's degree because that increases our faculty and grows our nursing program."

### Task Force Tackles Idaho Nursing Shortage

Idaho Governor Jim Risch (R) recently appointed a group of 18 educators, lawmakers, and other health care professionals to tackle Idaho's nursing shortage. "This particular field has not only a problem, it's a crisis," Risch said at a news conference.

Risch said 800 students were turned away from Idaho's eight nursing programs last year because the programs already were at capacity. Risch vowed in his inaugural address in June to organize the state's university leaders to make room for more Idaho nursing students. He said that he had gathered the "best and the brightest people in Idaho" to solve the nursing shortage problem.

The task force is expected to develop ways the state can help nursing schools hire more faculty, educate more student nurses, and improve the shortage of nurses statewide. They will be discussing issues related to faculty recruitment, student admissions, data analysis and the use of technology in nursing education. Recommendations likely will include requests for money to fund more faculty positions, classroom capacity or other nursing programs. The group expects to give Risch a list of recommendations by the end of October.

### Virginia Expands Nursing Loan Program

On August 15, Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine (D) and Sallie Mae, the country's leading provider of student loans, announced a renewed commitment to and expansion of the year-old program – **Teach for Virginia and Care for Virginia** – which repays 10 percent of eligible students' original loan balances for the 2006-07 year.

In addition, this year it will waive all origination fees – at another 2 percent savings – and, depending on the lender, students can earn an additional loan credit of up to 3.3 percent or an interest rate reduction up to 1.25 percentage points.

Through a partnership with the state, nursing or teaching students at any Virginia college or university who take out the federally-backed Sallie Mae loans, make payments on time for three years, and work in those fields in the state for three years are eligible. According to Kaine, the state needs to do what it can to draw people to the nursing profession. "The demand for nurses increases every time the age of the population increases," Kaine said. "So we're seeing demographics pushing us in a very dramatic way toward more need for nurses."