October 31, 2026

Courtney F. Aklin, PhD
Director National Institute of Nursing Research
National Institutes of Health
31 Center Drive, Room 5B03
Bethesda, MD 20892-2178

RE: [NOT-NR-26-001] Request for Information (RFI): Inviting Comments and Suggestions on the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2027-2031

Dear Director Aklin:

On behalf of the 66 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), we appreciate your request for information on the National Institute of Nursing Research's (NINR) Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027-2031 and offer the below recommendations as you move forward. The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession, representing Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs),[1] nurse leaders, boards of nursing, students, faculty, and researchers. Together, we recognize how important science is to the discoveries, innovations, and cures that directly impact the health of our nation. Central to that work is the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR).

Throughout NINR's rich history, we have consistently seen how nurse scientists are developing and testing community-based models of care, while increasing collaboration within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and championing translational research that supports healthcare for all. It is through this innovative and substantial work that we have seen strong research outcomes, including prevention and care for low birthweight in infants,[2] symptom management for those with Alzheimer's,[3] reducing pressure sores through the development of the Braden Scale,[4] and safe staffing standards.[5] NINR is also looking to the future as they begin advancing the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data science to inform and improve healthcare.[6]

[1] APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).
[2] Cantelon, Philip L. PhD. National Institute of Nursing Research, NINR, Bringing Science to Life. (September 2010). Page 87. Retrieved from: https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/NINR_History_Book_508.pdf
[3] Ibid., Page 180-185.
[4] The National Institute of Nursing Research, Changing Practice, Changing Lives: 10 Landmark Nursing Research Studies. Page 5. Retrieved from: https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/docs/10-landmark-nursing-research-studies.pdf
[5] Ibid., Page 3-4.
[6] The National Institute of Nursing Research. Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Data Science Working Group, Recommendations to the NACNR. (May 2025). Retrieved from: https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/docs/NINR%20AI%20Working%20Group_Council%20Presentation_May%202025_508c.pdf

To ensure NINR and our nurse scientists continue their vital work at the forefront of addressing chronic disease prevention, patient care, and recovery, and as they prepare nurses for practice, the NCC urges the consideration of the following recommendations:

Foundational Nursing Research Priorities:

- Innovation and Forward Thinking: Continue to advance nursing research and science by translating evidence into policy and studying emerging science such as AI.
- Strengthen Nursing Workforce and Healthcare Delivery: Prioritize research on the RN and APRN workforce and on implementation science that supports primary and specialty healthcare needs.
- Improve Healthcare Outcomes: Support nursing practice and healthcare models that promote patient-centered care across the life continuum. Continue to focus on rural and underserved areas and build capacity for addressing ongoing and emerging healthcare needs.
- Areas of research focus may include AI and data science, the nursing workforce, women's health, chronic disease and symptom management, anesthesia care, maternal health, geriatrics, palliative care, HIV prevention, nutrition, burnout and stress management, emerging healthcare models, and healthcare outcomes.

Emerging Science:

- Emerging science is powered by nursing innovation, which is why nurses are well positioned to identify barriers and develop approaches that translate into meaningful improvements in patient and community outcomes.
- Ensure nurses are included in developing, assessing, and implementing safe, high-quality, and effective technologies, including electronic healthcare records, AI, telehealth, and other areas.
- Prioritize safety, effectiveness, usability, privacy, and mitigation of bias to ensure these technologies strengthen, rather than replace clinical judgment and patient-centered care.

Scientific Workforce and Training:

- Support educational pathways for future nursing researchers and PhD prepared nurses.
- Enhance career development for nurse scientists and researchers through such efforts as early exposure to the research process, mentorship, and traineeships.
- Promote the DNP-PhD partnership for broader impact across healthcare settings.
- Prioritize consistent support and sustained funding for multi-year studies and education and training opportunities, such as for early-career investigators or those working in community or resource-limited settings.

Innovation:

- Engage nurses, patients, and the community throughout the process, from design and testing, to assessing, implementing and evaluating, while prioritizing safety, accessibility, and privacy.
- Study technology's role in nursing recruitment and retention and how innovation can support the nursing workforce.
- Guarantee that new tools and innovations reduce barriers or burdens to the healthcare system and healthcare team, including nurses, who use them.

Translation and Implementation:

- Continue work that looks at sustainability, scalability, cost, and potential barriers to primary and specialty care, community and rural health, and public health.

- Reinvest in research that addresses nursing workforce needs to support their work in all practice settings.
- Communicate about the research of nurse scientists to ensure that the work of NINR is not confined to the scientific silo and is instead shared broadly with those outside the research community.
- Recognize that implementation science is critical to better understanding which strategies and techniques are most effective at translating research findings into everyday clinical care.
- Consider demonstration projects with flexible grant opportunities to test research in real-world settings and include new researchers, students, nurses, and community partners in this work.

Conditions of Daily Life and Care Settings:

- Expand on NINR's population health initiatives and encourage the further connection of those priorities to workforce availability, safety, shortages, models of care, and barriers to care, particularly for those in rural and medically underserved areas.
- Identify care models that support Medicare beneficiaries and other populations facing barriers to accessing care.
- Continue research on early intervention, prevention, and addressing the healthcare needs of the nation.
- Address the biggest gaps in care delivery through nursing research that includes improving diagnosis, treatment, and patient outcomes.
- Support the gathering of evidence that is most needed to guide clinical decisions to improve health outcomes.

Partnerships:

- Work with academic, practice, and community partners around a shared research agenda.
- Ensure any commission, committee, or taskforce includes nurse scientists and researchers, including those nurses with expertise in education, practice, regulation, and research.
- Continue to ensure nursing science translates into practice.

As NINR considers ways to build upon this legacy of impactful work, the NCC recognizes the expertise of our current and future nurse scientists who are central to innovation, discovery, and direct improvement on patient care. We appreciate the opportunity to provide these recommendations. If the Nursing Community Coalition can be of any additional assistance to you or your staff, and to set up a meeting to discuss shared goals, please contact the coalition's Executive Director, Rachel Minahan, at rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org. Thank you again for your consideration of these recommendations and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
Academy of Neonatal Nursing
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Heart Failure Nurses

American Association of Neuroscience Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American Association of Post-Acute Care Nursing
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Nursing Informatics Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association, Inc.
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Public Health Association, Public Health Nursing Section
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Public Health Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Dermatology Nurses' Association
DNPs of Color
Emergency Nurses Association
Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Black Nurses Association
National Consortium of Academic Nurse Educators, Inc.
National Council of State Boards of Nursing
National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers
National Hartford Center of Gerontological Nursing Excellence
National League for Nursing
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties

Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
NurseTRUST
Oncology Nursing Society
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Society of Pediatric Nurses
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society