



Kristen F. Soares, President

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
California State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: COVID-19 Impact on Nursing Student Education**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), I respectfully ask that you exercise emergency powers to temporarily lift the regulatory limitations on simulation education for California's nursing students. As you are aware, AICCU institutions are critical contributors to the state's health systems, producing 46% of new degrees in health professions, including over 4,000 graduates with nursing degrees, making this a significant issue for California's private, independent colleges and universities.

Due to the mounting threat of COVID-19, a growing number of hospitals are discontinuing nursing student clinical rotations. With over 30 percent of a nursing student's education occurring in a clinical setting, the impact of the loss of these clinical rotations requires urgent action. Compounding the issue is the fact that California nursing students are currently limited in how much of their education can be completed in a simulated hospital environment.

Specifically, the California Nursing Practice Act (16 CCR Section 1429) requires 75 percent of students' clinical education must take place during rotations at hospitals, with simulation training limited to 25 percent. Given the growing impact of COVID-19, I respectfully request that you consider an emergency change to allow a cap of up to 50 percent simulation training for current students' clinical education. This is critically needed for a limited time to address this growing crisis and threat to our students continued nursing education. Lacking such a change, we fear that many existing students will not graduate on time this year. Further complicating matters, many of these students could be at risk of losing financial aid and Veterans Affairs funds if they do not meet certain graduation timelines.

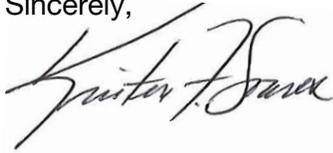
I want you to know that simulated education has proven to be a comprehensive and trusted method of training nurses, and many other states throughout the country, including Florida, Texas, and New York, allow up to 50 percent of a student's training to be in a simulated environment. We believe it to be a trusted tool for developing the next generation of frontline, healthcare professionals.

Governor Newsom, thank you for your leadership and in these trying times, our top priority is to ensure our institutions and students are doing all they can to contribute to the health and well-being of our communities. A temporary increase in the amount of allowed simulation time will

allow California's future nurses to continue their education without financial hardship or delays to their graduation. With COVID-19 expected to continue putting significant strain on our hospitals and healthcare system, nurses and the care they provide is more necessary than ever.

On behalf of AICCU, please know that we are your partner in addressing the many facets of this crisis. For now, I urge your administration and the Board of Registered Nursing to consider temporarily lifting the cap on nursing simulation education in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristen Soares". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kristen" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Soares".

Kristen Soares

CC: Lande Ajose, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Kimberly Kirchmeyer, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs  
Loretta Melby, Acting Executive Officer, Board of Registered Nursing  
Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor, California Community Colleges  
Loren J. Blanchard, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs,  
California State University  
Michael Brown, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs,  
University of California  
AICCU Executive Committee