



March 12, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom  
State Capitol of California  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, California, 95814

**Re: Nursing Programs in Jeopardy due to COVID-19 in California**

Dear Governor Newsom,

As the board members for the California Association of Colleges of Nursing, we are writing respectfully on behalf of our baccalaureate and higher degree member schools and the enrolled students to ask that you exercise emergency powers to temporarily lift the regulatory limitations on simulation education for California's nursing students.

Due to the mounting threat of COVID-19, a growing number of hospitals are making the difficult choice to discontinue nursing clinical rotations forcing schools to find alternative methods for students to meet their clinical hours. Because over thirty percent of a nursing student's education occurs in a clinical setting, the impact of the loss of these clinical rotations is dire. Compounding the issue is the fact that California nursing students are currently limited in how much 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 to take place in a direct patient care setting approved by the BRN, with simulation education limited to 25 percent of the clinical experience. We are asking that nursing programs be given the flexibility to increase the out of hospital experience immediately to 50 percent of the time in simulation education, for a limited time to address this growing crisis and threat to our students continued nursing education. In addition, in the event clinical rotations are cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis and should schools be unable to reassign students to an alternate clinical facility, we are also asking that schools be allowed to have clinical education take place as simulated education, as long as the clinical learning objectives are met. To be sure, without raising the statutory limits in simulated nursing education, many of the State's existing students will not graduate on time this year.

Simulation education has proven to be a comprehensive and trusted method of educating nurses, and many other states throughout the country, including Florida, Texas and New York, allow up to 50 percent of a student's education to be in a simulated environment. It is a trusted tool for meeting the clinical learning objectives and developing the next generation of frontline healthcare professionals.

Complicating matters, many of these students could be at risk of losing financial aid and VA funds if they don't meet certain graduation timelines.

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.

With swift and temporary action, we can keep California's nursing students on track and prevent a decline in the overall number of registered nurses in our state. We urge your administration and the Board of Registered Nursing to consider temporarily lifting the cap on nursing simulation education in California. Thank you for your attention to this matter, should you have follow-up questions, please contact Dr. Scott R Ziehm at [srziehm@usfca.edu](mailto:srziehm@usfca.edu)


Sincerely,



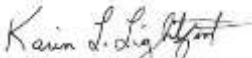
Scott R Ziehm, DNP, RN, CACN President



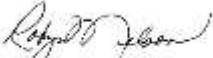
Mary Wickman, PhD, RN, CACN President-Elect



Leah FitzGerald, PhD, FNP-BC, CACN Secretary



Karin L. Lightfoot, PhD, RN, CACN Member-at-Large I



Robyn Nelson, PhD, RN, CACN Member-at-Large II

CC: California Board of Registered Nursing: Loretta Melby, Acting Executive Officer  
Chief Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary for the Office of the Governor: Stuart Thompson  
Committee on Business and Professions Chair: Assembly Member Evan Low  
Committee on Business and Professions Vice Chair: Assembly Member William P. Brough  
Executive Branch: Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary  
California Health & Human Services Agency: Mark Ghaly, MD  
California Department of Education: Tony Thurmond  
Assembly Education Committee: Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
Senate Education Committee: Connie Leyva, Chair  
Assembly Committee on Health: James Wood, DDS  
Senate Committee on Health: Richard Pan, MD