April 10, 2015

Senator Karen Spilka, Co-Chair
Representative Brian Dempsey, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Massachusetts State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Honorable Chairs:

The Massachusetts Action Coalition (MAAC) represents nursing organizations from all sectors of our profession. We speak with one voice in support of funding the Department of Higher Education’s (DHE) Nursing and Allied Health Initiative (line item 7066-0020) which was eliminated in the Governor’s recommended budget.

Since 2005, this line item has provided important funding for nursing education and practice innovations grants to address the critical shortage of nurses and nursing faculty. More recently the focus has been on grants for advancing the shared goals of DHE’s Nursing and Allied Health Workforce Development Plans and the MAAC. The primary goal is a more educated and diverse nursing workforce with 66% of registered nurses at the BSN or higher degree level by 2020 and to be at 80% by 2025.

Massachusetts is facing pressing health care challenges: an aging, more diverse population with more chronic conditions, rising costs, more people insured, and a shortage of providers. We can address these challenges now by maximizing the role of nurses who are on the front-line of health care. Nurses make up the largest sector of the Massachusetts health care workforce with more than 143,000 registered in our state. The Massachusetts Action Coalition and all of its member organizations strongly request that the line item be funded at $400,000 in the upcoming budget process.

Please help us to continue this valuable work. More information on the initiative is available at www.mass.edu/nursing.

Sincerely,

Organization of Nurse Leaders, MA & RI (ONL)

MA Association of Colleges of Nursing (MACN)

American Nurses Association MA (ANA MA)

MA RI League for Nursing (MARILN)

MA Coalition of Nurse Practitioners (MCNP)

MA Senior Care Association

Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts (HCA MA)