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August 3, 2021

Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, Chairwoman,
House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
272 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0518

Dear Chairwoman Eshoo,

As chief clinical officer of the American Association Critical-Care Nurses (AACN), I am writing on behalf of the nation's more than 500,000 acute and critical care nurses. Recently, a frontline ICU nurse told me that her experience working with COVID-19 patients made her feel "expendable." She described the stress of caring for highly contagious patients while reusing personal protective equipment (PPE) designed for single use. This poignant commentary is representative of the feedback we are hearing every day from nurses who cared for the sickest COVID-19 patients during the pandemic.

As you know, shortages of PPE forced health care professionals to reuse equipment in ways that violated manufacturer and federal recommendations, and were not evidence based. Because of this, we're asking that you prioritize H.R. 1436, the PPE in America Act. Expediting this to a vote is a tangible way to recognize the value of frontline healthcare providers and support an efficient, sustainable PPE supply chain. We must ensure nurses, and all frontline healthcare providers, never again lack the PPE needed to keep them safe.

Nurses complied with contingency and crisis measures for the use of PPE supplies for weeks on end because no alternatives existed. They continued to show up despite this danger because nursing's expertise is unique and indispensable. Without it, even more patients would have died. However, the profession's commitment to caring for critically ill patients should never again require a suspension of evidence-based safety practices. We urge you to move this bill forward and support its success.

If you need further information about the multiple roles of critical care nurses in healthcare and their experiences during the pandemic, AACN can provide experts with extensive experience who have been at the frontlines caring for patients with COVID-19. As the world's largest specialty nursing organization, we stand ready to advise and collaborate with you on these and other issues related to nursing and healthcare.

Sincerely,



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