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A Call to Action

As many of you know, I serve as your APP Representative and the Chair on the UCSF APP Advisory Board. I'm reaching out with an important call to action that affects the future of nursing and advanced practice education nationwide.

The U.S. Department of Education is currently implementing new measures under the "One Big Beautiful Bill." As part of this process, the Department has **excluded nursing from the list of recognized "professional" degrees**. This change would directly limit how future nurses are able to finance their education, with significant downstream effects on the healthcare workforce.

While nursing organizations are leading advocacy efforts from a nursing perspective, the **UCSF APP Policy and Advocacy Committee is intentionally including Physician Assistants in this effort**. Our goal is to advocate collectively for **all Advanced Practice Providers**, recognizing that policies affecting one APP role ultimately impact us all—through workforce shortages, access to care, and team-based practice.

A brief overview of the concern regarding the reclassification of nursing as a non-professional degree: Nursing was not included in the RISE Committee report, and this omission poses a significant threat to the clinical and academic workforce pipeline. The impact extends beyond bedside clinicians to include nurse educators and faculty in academic settings.

As many of you know, advanced practice providers now comprise approximately **40% of the nation's healthcare providers**. Excluding nursing—representing the largest healthcare profession in the United States—undermines workforce stability and equity across the healthcare system. Nursing must be afforded parity with our healthcare partners to ensure continued access, quality, and sustainability of care.

**We strongly encourage you to submit a public comment using the template language below (please personalize as appropriate):**

Dear Department of Education,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I bring \_\_\_\_\_ years of experience as a [Nurse/Physician Assistant]. I am writing to respectfully request that the Department of Education explicitly include post-baccalaureate nursing education and training programs under the "Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences" Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes (series 51.38) in the proposed regulatory definition of professional degree programs.

Specifically, I urge the Department to ensure that all nursing and physician assistant degrees at the master's and doctoral levels are comprehensively recognized within this regulatory framework, including:

“A professional degree only includes degrees in the following fields: (i) Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.), Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.), Law (L.L.B. or J.D.), Medicine (M.D.), Optometry (O.D.), Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.), Podiatry (D.P.M., D.P., or Pod.D.), Theology (M.Div. or M.H.L.), Clinical Psychology (Psy.D. or Ph.D.), Nursing (M.S.N., DNP, Ph.D.), and Physician Assistant (MPAS, MHS, MSPAS, DMMSc, DHSc, Ph.D).”

Recognizing advanced education and training programs at the master's and doctoral levels within these disciplines is essential to fostering professional leadership, innovation, and excellence in healthcare delivery. Moreover, this inclusion ensures the development and sustainability of an educational pipeline that supports providers at all levels who are prepared to meet the diverse and growing needs of the population.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and urge the Department to take action to ensure these vital educational programs are appropriately recognized within the proposed regulatory definition of professional degree programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

**How to submit your comment:**

visit: <https://www.regulations.gov/>

Click: Reimagining and Improving Student Education

Click: Comment (<https://www.regulations.gov/document/ED-2025-OPE-0944-0001>)

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out!

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