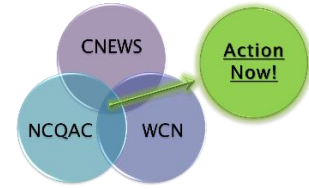


NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Frank Kohel 206-787-1200

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## **Legislature’s \$40 million investment in nurse educator salaries major step forward in *Action Now!* plan**

*Action Now!*'s work to address the nursing faculty shortage in Washington state made a major step forward in the 2019 Legislative Session with a new appropriation of \$40 million to increase nurse educator salaries. This investment reflects an approximate 26.5% increase, is aligned with the need determined by the *Action Now!* Steering Committee and was advocated for by nursing unions.

Securing sustainable financing for nursing programs was among the top goals set out by the *Action Now!* coalition when it was formed two years ago. One area of particular concern was increasing nurse educator salaries to address nurse educator recruitment and retention – and to ensure Washington state can fully enroll the currently allotted student positions that currently go unfilled due to lack of nurse educators. With an aging population and a strong demand for more nurses, ensuring we can graduate the maximum number of nursing students is critical to our state’s health care system.

In December 2017, the Washington Center for Nursing published the results of its survey of nurse educators. That survey found that when asked the main reason for considering leaving nursing education within the last year, the most frequent reason was higher pay, followed by lack of a manageable workload.

The Workforce Education Investment Act, HB 2158, directly addresses what nurse educators have consistently found to be the most challenging issue associated with faculty recruitment and retention – pay that is dramatically lower than what first year nurses earn in a hospital setting.

The State Board for Community and Technical College is responsible for allocating the funds to nursing programs, after which individual colleges will implement salary increases through the collective bargaining process with the faculty union at the college.

As the State Board and colleges move forward with implementation, *Action Now!* urges them to utilize the funding, as intended, for nurse educator salaries only; apply the salary increase to both filled and vacant positions; include Nursing Program Directors, Full-Time Faculty and Part-Time Faculty under the definition of “Nurse Educators”; and not use the salary increase in HB 2158 to supplant employee benefits or COLA. (See letter to SBCTC.)

All community and technical college faculty deserve a pay increase, not only nursing faculty and those in other high demand programs where there are significant faculty vacancies. Demand for information technology, computer science, trades and health-related professions is high in our community and in our state. Many of the high demand professions will also receive an increase through HB 2158. We recognize that faculty across disciplines deserve an increase and support increased salaries for those disciplines not included in HB 2158.

Additionally, *Action Now!* supports equitable salaries for nursing faculty in 4-year colleges and universities to ensure strong nursing programs at all levels.

The *Action Now!* movement is spearheaded by the Washington Center for Nursing, the statewide central nursing resource center; the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC), the state's nursing regulatory board; and the Council on Nursing Education in Washington State, the statewide organization of deans and directors of Washington nursing programs. The Washington State Nurses Association and SEIU Healthcare 1199NW, members of the *Action Now!* Coalition, provided analysis and legislative support to help secure the additional funding for nursing faculty salaries.