

# National Coalition of Hospital-based Nursing Schools

March 23, 2022

## **Teams Call Follow Up Actions**

On Tuesday, March 22, the Coalition held a Teams call for all programs to review the status of the TRAIN Act and propose follow up actions. Special guest on the call was Abby Duggan, the senior health policy advisor to U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and lead Senate sponsor of S. 1568, the TRAIN Act.

### **Abby Duggan's key points:**

- She is very optimistic that Congress will move on the TRAIN Act this year.
- Everyone who needs to know about the TRAIN Act in Congress DOES know about it. Which means the Coalition's lobbying efforts have been largely successful.
- There is at least one major legislative opportunity, and possibly two more, to get the TRAIN Act included in 'must-pass' legislation. The opportunities will happen in the fall.
- We need at least three more GOP senators to cosponsor the bill. There are 3 Democrats waiting to 'pair up' with a GOP member and be added as cosponsors. The 3 Democrats are Heinrich (NM), Carper (DE) and Manchin (WV).
- CMS needs to become more supportive in getting the TRAIN Act passed. Abby said she will be pursuing this with CMS and other senate offices.
- The informal Congressional Budget Office score of the bill is about \$180 million. There are still many senators who want to know what the 'offset' will be to pay for this. Abby is working on this issue, but our Coalition will work closely with her on this as well. There may be no need for a separate offset if the TRAIN Act is included in the year-end spending package.

### **Additionally, we have the following recommendations to the Coalition that will also aid in the passage of the TRAIN Act this year:**

1. Coalition Survey. We will be conducting a survey of all hospital-based nursing schools to gather information on issues frequently requested by congressional offices. For example: how many nurses are produced by these programs each year.
2. Update Medicare Cost Report Data. We will work with an outside Medicare data firm to update the Medicare pass-through data. We are presently using 5-year-old data. This both identifies the hospitals/schools that have programs and the value of their pass-through payments.
3. We will organize several trips to DC of small groups of school presidents to personally press the case for passage of the TRAIN Act. Congressional buildings will be almost fully opened for meetings sometime in May. CMS will also be holding in-person meetings soon.

Although it seems like we have been working on the TRAIN Act for a very long time, the legislation was introduced in the Senate in May 2021 and in the House in July 2021 -so, less than a year for both bills. It usually takes a full Congress (two years) to move this kind of legislation...sometimes it takes even longer.

Don't hesitate to contact me to discuss further. As always, we greatly appreciate your support and hope you will either continue your paid membership in the Coalition or decide to formally become a paying member. We definitely need your financial support to continue this important work.

Thank you!

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