



American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc.

330 N. Wabash Ave., Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60611

Phone: 312-321-5173 | Fax: 312-673-6719

info@aaohn.org | www.aaohn.org

Mary Gene Ryan
MPH, BSN, COHN-S/SM, CSP, FAAOHN
President

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Members of Congress,

The American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN), the nearly 5,000 member organization for the nurses who care for American's workers, supports the National Nurse Act of 2017 (H.R. 1651). As we have recently seen in America, the role of public health is vital to the health of our nation. For the future the public health system must to move from an illness to a prevention/wellness paradigm. This bill designates the Chief Nurse Officer, an existing position in the U.S. Public Health Service, as the National Nurse for Public Health. This position would provide a publicly visible nurse leader who would collaborate with health care leaders to address health disparities and set goals for better public health. This role is needed now more than ever.

Because public health and occupational health are both vital subspecialties of Community Health Nursing, this is a great opportunity to partner with public health. We need to work together with this office to protect the health of all community members. The occupational and environmental health nurse plays a pivotal role within a community by promoting the health and safety of workers, protecting families from adverse environmental effects through community education, and participating in community public health disaster preparedness. We can also provide input to national health priorities, health promotion and disease prevention, and education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Gene Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Gene Ryan, MPH, BSN, COHN-S/SM, CSP, FAAOHN
President, American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc.