March 24, 2016

Dr. Patricia Grady

Director, National Institute for Nursing Research

Dear Dr. Grady,

The Alliance for Nursing Informatics (ANI) advances nursing informatics leadership, practice, education, policy and research through a unified voice of nursing informatics organizations. ANI has reviewed the National Institute for Nursing Research (NINR) Strategic Plan. In the spirit of collaboration, we offer our comments as nursing stakeholders.

Background: ANI commends NINR on the focus on Technology to Improve Health as a cross-cutting area crucial to the advancement of nursing science and future of nursing research. Clinical data captured through electronic systems is increasingly used for both the provision of health care and the conduct of scientific research.   In fact, the use of clinical data for science is essential in realizing the NIH vision of precision medicine and the National Academy of Medicine vision for a learning health system. Although NINR does not focus on systems of health care delivery, it can and must attend to matters of clinical information structure and management, as it directly affects research in NINR areas of scientific focus. Substantial nursing-focused informatics research and development is necessary to support the application of technology outlined in the draft NINR strategic plan.

Recommendation: ANI encourages NINR to devote specific attention to studies and projects that test and evaluate the implementation of nationally recognized standards, particularly LOINC and SNOMED-CT, to structure nursing documentation. It is only through the use of these standards that nursing data will be structured, shared, and compared in ways that allow the influence of nursing's unique contribution to population health and/or patient outcomes to be measured and results generalized, in the context of care coordination.

The effective use of standards is necessary for the development and deployment of most innovative technologies, including those referenced as part of the strategic plan's cross-cutting area of Technology

to Improve Health. Without robust nursing data standardization, interoperability, systems for aggregating and analyzing nursing data, or standard approaches for integrating clinical nursing data from applications or point of care devices, the innovative and applied technology projects funded by NINR will be disconnected and potentially difficult to scale and spread. Nationally recognized data standards are available and recommended for nursing. Please see American Nurses Association's (ANA) position statement for Inclusion of Recognized Terminologies within EHRs and other Health Information Technology Solutions. ANI endorses the use of these standards in NINR funded research and the inclusion of nurse informaticists on science teams and review panels to ensure the informatics rigor of NINR funded studies.

ANI appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the conversation on NINR's next strategic plan to describe priority areas of research aligned with the NINR mission to promote and improve the health and quality of life of individuals, families, and communities. We believe that the informatics research priorities ANI has endorsed in this letter can have a significant impact on improving health and quality of life in the next 10-20 years and are critical to enhancing healthcare for all.

Sincerely,

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