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Good Evening. I am Meredith Roberts, Executive Director of American Nurses Association - Vermont

There are more than 6,000 RN's working in Vermont, average age 48.

By 2030, Vermont will experience a 50% growth in the population aged sixty-five and older, with many nurses retiring. Demand for registered nurses will grow by about 22% (AHEC, 2017).

Average salary of a nurse practitioner, is over 100,000 but nurse faculty in state colleges with the same education make 30-60K less. If you want more nurses, you need for faculty, so higher education funding as well as nurse scholarships at all levels are needed

75 % of nurses questioned in a recent survey said they had been abused at work physically and verbally (Dvorak, 2017), 80% by patients. We need to invest in Mental Health reform so patients in crisis receive quality care and are not waiting for a bed in ERs, and please continue to support opioid crisis needs.

In America, health-care workers are five to 12 times more likely than other workers to experience violence at work; worldwide, nurses are more likely to be attacked at work than prison guards and police officers (The Conversation, 2017).

Safe staffing and the ability to prohibit mandatory overtime requires an adequate workforce.

Additionally nurses are aware they must help protect children from toxic chemicals, particularly in our drinking water. (PFOA). Vermont made national news when PFOAs, which causes cancer, infertility, respiratory disease, complications during pregnancy...and more was found (Yee, 2016)

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that we must make "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society" to save our planet... Will Gore (2018 para 1) warns " many ancient trees will not survive; extreme weather events will become ever more common". In Vermont we also worry about increased Algae blooms, increases in tick and mosquito borne diseases, and the most vulnerable at risk

So ANA has joined a coalition of more than 300 Vermont medical and health professionals who are working to open people's eyes to the magnitude of the health threat that climate change poses, and to ask for increased funding for the state's weatherization program by at least \$5.m in FY 2020

The Annual Energy Report by VT Dept of Public Service, 2019, notes a 2020 goal of 80,000 homes

weatherized, but in 2017 only 2,012 units served...this started in 2008, and they are not even halfway there.

Until the summer of 2018, Efficiency Vermont (EVT) used limited thermal efficiency funds to provide incentives for heat pumps, thus reducing the funding that was available for weatherization efforts. Although EVT has chosen to discontinue this practice for now, there is no regulatory mechanism currently in place that would prevent EVT from making this decision in the future.

“Climate change is our health emergency.”

More prevalent extreme storms across the country are just a few examples of how climate change will radically destabilize the ways in which our society ensures the health and well-being of Vermonters

Here in Vermont, the heat wave of 2018 caused a record spike in heat related illness and emergency room visits. Heavy rains caused an unprecedented release of untreated waste from municipal water treatment plants. We have the highest per capita rate of Lyme disease in the nation. These and other health issues are not random. They are precursors of devastating health effects the Center for Disease Control has been predicting for years. The most vulnerable among us – the elderly, Vermonters with low incomes, those with chronic illness, and children – are and will be hit first and hardest. They are often also the slowest to recover.

Joined by the Vermont Medical Society, the Vermont Public Health Association, the Vermont Chapter of the American Nurses Association and the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association, the Vermont Climate and Health Alliance argues that dramatically accelerating the state’s investment in our weatherization program must be a budget priority for the following reasons:

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- On average, weatherizing a home reduces a household’s energy costs by \$1,175 per year.
- weatherization also mitigates problems like mold and mildew build-up which cause or exacerbate a wide range of severe illnesses and disease.
- Finally, weatherizing 50,000 homes over 10 years would yield \$300-\$700 million in other public health benefits - due to reductions in respiratory and cardiovascular disease associated with air pollution and home heating.

Increasing investment in weatherization protects the health of all Vermonters, supported by proven and strong economic benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.