

NEWS & NOTES



Nursing director testifies on Capitol Hill

On May 22, Julie Sanford, director of the JMU School of Nursing, testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee on the nursing workforce and its ability to meet the nation's health care demands. Sanford also urged the panel to consider reauthorizing federal funds for Nursing Workforce Development Programs.

Sanford, JMU's representative to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, was nominated to speak by committee member Tim Kaine, D-Va. It marked the first time in a decade that the nursing profession was represented at a Senate HELP Committee hearing.

The nationwide shortage of nurses is particularly acute in rural areas, Sanford said. Compounding the problem is the fact that the average age of practicing nurses is increasing and many nursing schools are having to turn away qualified applicants because there are simply not enough faculty members to teach them, she said.

The Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act covers, among other programs, Advanced Nursing Education, which ensures that well trained nurses are available to meet the care needs of rural and underserved communities. Sanford testified that in 2014, JMU received funding through the ANE program to launch an online Doctor of Nursing Practice program,

'Support for Title VIII is essential to the sustainability of the nursing workforce. Each of these programs helps to provide students, faculty, schools, clinical training sites and community partners the resources necessary to ensure the supply of nurses remains strong to provide care to millions of patients in every corner of the country.'

—**JULIE SANFORD**, director, JMU School of Nursing, in her testimony before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee



Sanford is greeted by Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee.

and grant faculty worked with the "Suitcase Clinic" that provides care to individuals at local homeless shelters on a rotating basis.

Recently, JMU Nursing secured \$2.7 million in federal funds to recruit, admit and retain students interested in pursuing nursing and working in underserved primary-care environments in neighboring Page County, Virginia.

Sanford said she was honored to represent JMU and the nursing profession at the hearing, calling the

experience "a highlight of my academic nursing career." She said she especially enjoyed the committee members' questions following her testimony, which included an exchange with Chairman Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., about the rigorous clinical requirements for nurse practitioner students at JMU.