October 31, 2000

Warren M. Gold, M.D.
Chair, Clinical Affairs Committee
University of California, San Francisco

Dear Dr. Gold,

The School of Nursing is very concerned about the effects of the San Francisco General Hospital’s budget crisis on the academic and training mission of the UCSF School of Nursing. The richness of the clinical training experiences available at SFGH is unparalleled for both our undergraduate and graduate students. The following paragraphs detail the benefits of this training facility for students enrolled in our masters program, particularly in the various advanced practice programs in the School of Nursing.

All of the primary care programs in the School of Nursing, as well as most of the Clinical Nurse Specialist programs, depend heavily on San Francisco General Hospital inpatient and outpatient services for student clinical placements. The Nurse Midwifery program has 26 student nurse midwifery first and second year placements at SFGH in labor and delivery and the women’s outpatient clinic that they use throughout the year. The Adult Nurse Practitioner program places 12-15 first and second students/year at SFGH, including placements in Psychiatric Emergency Services, Internal Medicine/Primary Care, Emergency Services, HIV/AIDS clinics, Infectious Diseases, Occupational Health, and Gynecology. The Critical Care/Trauma Program places two to five second year Critical Care/Trauma students in the Emergency Department or with the Trauma Team. The Pediatric Nurse Practitioner program has four to six students/year in the Pediatric Ambulatory Clinic and occasionally places students in specialty pediatric clinics at SFGH. Currently, there are ten Family Nurse Practitioner students at SFGH; eight are in the Family Health Center and Refugee Clinic, one is in the Women’s Clinic, and one is on the Skilled Nursing and Rehab Facility learning the management of chronically ill indigent patients. Therefore, San Francisco General Hospital provides a total of 42-62 student clinical placements/year for our School. Below are anecdotal comments relayed by faculty affiliated with the various training programs.
The director of the nurse midwifery program noted that because of the “freezes” at SFGH, they are having difficulty replacing senior/staff and faculty midwives in the SFGH Midwifery Service. This in turn impacts student learning as well as patient care. She also remarked that the nursing shortage on labor and delivery and in the clinic has created an extremely stressful situation for patients and staff where there is sometimes an atmosphere of “chaos, resentment and short tempers all around.” The director of the Critical Care/Trauma program remarked that SFGH is a major site for their students as it is the only level one trauma center in San Francisco where students gain experience in high acuity injured patients. Primary care nursing students enrolled in the Family Nurse Practitioner program consistently request SFGH more than any other site, although they admit that it is also one of the most challenging sites. They are exposed to a multi-ethnic, extremely diverse and underserved population, as well as to some of the best preceptors we have (UCSF Family Practice residents and nurse practitioners working in the Family Health Center and the Refugee Clinic). They gain valuable experience in multi-disciplinary, collaborative practice with the residents. Students in both training programs (residents and NP students) obtain important formative experiences on how to work collaboratively that undoubtedly shape their respective careers. San Francisco General Hospital and its allied clinics are the “gold standard” by which other sites are measured and students generally believe they “could go anywhere” after clinical training at SFGH and be successful.

It would be impossible to continue the various masters programs in their present form if the clinical facilities at SFGH were reduced in scope. The UCSF FNP, ANP, and PNP programs are consistently rated the premier programs in the U.S. by deans and directors of other graduate schools. The loss of SFGH to the UCSF School of Nursing would have devastating consequences for our training and service mission and would undoubtedly result in the loss of our reputation as the best School in the United States for education as a nurse practitioner.

Sincerely,

Sally Rankin
Sally Rankin, RN, PhD, FNP
Associate Professor & Chair, Faculty Council

Kathleen Dracup
Kathleen Dracup, RN, DNSc, FNP
Professor and Dean