

## Health and Education Legislation in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress

Through out each two-year session of Congress, AACN works with staff and legislators to create new legislation to enhance nursing education and research. The list below provides an overview of the legislation for which AACN has assisted in the drafting process or has offered support based on the priorities set forth by the AACN Government Affairs Committee (GAC).

**The Nursing School Capacity Act of 2007 (H.R. 677)** was introduced on January 24, 2007 and sponsored by Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ). The bill would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to request that the Institute of Medicine study constraints encountered by schools of nursing in admitting and graduating the number of registered nurses necessary to ensure patient safety. Topics to be studied include: trends in enrollments and qualified students turned away, number and demographic characteristics of enrolled students and recent graduates over time, number and demographic characteristics of graduate-prepared nurses that do not pursue the faculty role, and satisfaction of nurse-managers and new graduate nurses. H. R. 677 has 76 co-sponsors and was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

**The Nurse Education, Expansion and Development Act (H.R. 772)** was introduced on January 31, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Nita Lowey (D-NY), Peter King (R-NY), and Lois Capps, RN (D-CA). The bill would provide capitation or formula grants based on enrollment in schools of nursing. Funds may be used for hiring or retaining current faculty, purchasing educational equipment, enhancing clinical laboratories, repairing and expanding infrastructure, or recruiting students. H.R. 772 was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

**The Nurse Education, Expansion and Development Act (S. 446)** was introduced on January 31, 2007 and sponsored by Sens. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD). It is the companion bill to H.R. 772 and like its House counterpart, would provide capitation or formula grants based on enrollment to schools of nursing. Funds may be used for hiring new or retaining current faculty, purchasing educational equipment, enhancing clinical laboratories, repairing and expanding infrastructure, or recruiting students. S. 446 was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**The Nurse Faculty Higher Education Act (H.R. 2384)** was introduced on May 17, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) and Charles Boustany (R-LA). The bill would amend the Higher Education Act by allowing the Secretary of Education to award grants that create pilot projects for partnerships between an accredited school of nursing and a hospital or other health facility. These grants would be created in order to retain the facility's staff of experienced nurses and use the graduate educated nurses as faculty. The bill requires such individuals to teach for two years for each year of support received under the program. H.R. 2384 was referred to the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness.

**The Teacher and Nurse Support Act (H.R. 2621)** was introduced on June 7, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Carolyn McCarthy, LPN, (D-NY) and Jon Porter (R-NV). The bill would amend the Higher Education Act to expand loan forgiveness and cancellation programs for teachers and nurses. This bill would authorize a maximum loan repayment of \$17,500 over five years for nurses that agree to work full-time in a clinical setting or as a faculty member at an accredited school of nursing. H.R. 2621 was referred to the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness.

### ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING

**The Nurse Faculty and Physical Therapist Act (S. 1628)** was introduced on June 14, 2007 and sponsored by Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Norm Coleman (R-MN), Susan Collins (R-ME), John Kerry (D-MA), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), and Ben Nelson (D-NE). The bill would address the scarcity of qualified nurse faculty by providing grants to schools of nursing to stimulate both enrollments in and graduations from nursing doctoral programs. Grant funds may be used to hire new faculty, retain existing faculty, purchase educational resources, create distance education programs for doctoral nursing and physical therapist education in rural areas, and assist recent graduates in serving as nurse faculty. Priority will be given to those institutions from states experiencing the greatest nurse and nurse faculty shortages. S. 1628 was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

**Nursing Education and Quality of Health Care Act (S. 1604)** was introduced on June 16, 2007 and sponsored by Sens. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Gordon Smith (R-OR). The bill would address patient safety and quality care, nursing faculty development, and the nursing shortage in rural areas. The bill would award grants for demonstration projects that advance the education, delivery, or measurement of quality and patient safety in nursing practice. The bill would provide grants to schools of nursing to create faculty recruitment and distance learning programs, scholarships and loan forgiveness for registered nurses pursuing graduate education, and funds for accelerated nursing programs. S. 1604 was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

#### **National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship and Loan Repayment Programs**

**Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2915)** was introduced on June 28, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Bruce Braley (D-IA), John Conyers (D-MI), Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), Leonard Boswell (D-IA), and Dave Loebsack (D-IA). The bill would authorize increased funding for the National Health Service Corps. H.R. 2915 would provide the means and incentive for health professions students to pursue advanced degrees, practice in underserved communities, and allow them the opportunity to teach future generations of health professionals. This bill was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

**Troops to Nurse Teachers Amendment (S. AMDT. 2268 to H.R. 1585)** was introduced on July 16, 2007 and sponsored by Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL). The amendment would address the critical shortage of nurses in the civilian and military sectors by permitting active duty nurses to serve a two-year tour of duty as a faculty member at a school of nursing while also encouraging retiring military nurses to become nurse educators. The amendment was adopted into a Manager's Package Amendment (S. AMDT. 2011) submitted by Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin (D-MI).

**Increasing Education Opportunities for Nurses and Nurse Faculty (H.R. 3597)** was introduced on September 19, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Carolyn McCarthy, LPN, (D-NY) and Steve LaTourette (R-OH). The bill would offer schools of nursing financial resources to help meet the nation's growing nursing workforce demands. Specifically, H.R. 3597 would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 by creating formula-based grants which consider the number of students who have matriculated through the nursing program and award funding to expand the number of faculty, as well as the school's facilities. The language of H.R. 3597 originated from Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) who were able to secure this text in the Senate passed Higher Education Extension Act of 2007.

**Nurse Managed Health Clinic (NMHC) Investment Act of 2007 (S. 2112)** was introduced on September 27, 2007 and sponsored by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Daniel Akaka (D-HI). The bill would amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants for the cost of operating nurse-managed health clinics that provide primary care for underserved or vulnerable populations. These clinics are associated with a school, college, or nursing department, federally qualified health center, or independent nonprofit health or social services agency. This bill has been referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

**Nursing Education Opportunities Act (S. 2230)** was introduced on October 25, 2007 and sponsored by Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE). The bill would offer an approach to address both the current nursing shortage and the shortage of doctoral nurse faculty members. By increasing the loan amounts in the Nursing Student Loan Program and clarifying the accelerated nursing programs under Title VIII, this bill would open more opportunities for nursing students to find federal support. Additionally, this bill focuses on a long-term solution to the nursing shortage by providing opportunities for nursing schools to create a doctoral nursing program, share programmatic and faculty resources through a doctoral consortium, and prepare additional nurse educators through the nurse faculty pilot project. These programs would provide a targeted solution to the nurse faculty shortage by establishing and sharing resources. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**Nursing Education Opportunities Act (H.R. 4001)** was introduced on October 30, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Charles Boustany (R-LA), Charles Melancon (D-LA), and Ron Lewis (R-KY). The bill would offer an approach to address both the current nursing shortage and the shortage of doctoral nurse faculty members. Like its Senate counterpart (S. 2230), this bill would open more opportunities for nursing students to find federal support. Additionally, this bill focuses on a long-term solution to the nursing shortage by providing opportunities for nursing schools to create a doctoral nursing program, share programmatic and faculty resources through a doctoral consortium, and prepare additional nurse educators through the nurse faculty pilot project. The bill was referred to the House Education and Labor Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

**Manager's Amendment to the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007 (H.R. 4137)** was introduced on November 9, 2007 by Rep. George Miller (D-CA) and passed by the House on February 7, 2008. The College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007 would reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA). Included as a part of the Manager's Amendment was the Nursing School Capacity Act of 2007. This amendment was put forth by Representatives Rush Holt (D-NJ) and Peter Welch (D-VT). Rep. Holt introduced the Nursing School Capacity Act in both the 109<sup>th</sup> and 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. The bill requests that the Institute of Medicine study constraints encountered by schools of nursing in admitting and graduating the number of registered nurses necessary to ensure patient safety. H.R. 4137 was signed into law (P.L. 110-315) on August 14, 2008.

**Troops to Nurse Teachers (TNT) Act of 2008 (S. 2705)** was introduced on March 5, 2008 and sponsored by Sens. Richard Durbin (D-IL), James Inhofe (R-OK), Barack Obama (D-IL), Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), Joseph Biden (D-DE), Jack Reed (D-RI), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Susan Collins (R-ME), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Elizabeth Dole (R-NC), and Daniel Inouye (D-HI). The bill was modeled after the successful Department of Defense program called Troops to Teachers. The goal of the program is to increase the number of nurse faculty members so schools of nursing may expand enrollments and alleviate the ongoing shortage. The TNT program offers: a fellowship program for Commissioned Officers with a graduate degree in nursing; a scholarship program for Commissioned Officers who have served at least 20 years of active duty as a nurse and are eligible for retirement; a transitional assistance program for Commissioned Officers of the Nurse Corps who have served at least 20 years and are already qualified to teach; and a program for retired Nurse Corps Officers who can serve as full-time faculty in an accredited school of nursing. The bill has been referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

**Troops to Nurse Teachers (TNT) Act of 2008 (H.R. 5878)** was introduced on April 23, 2008 and sponsored by Reps. Lois Capps (D-CA), Steve LaTourette (R-OH), Henry Waxman (D-CA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Charles Rangel (D-NY), Michael Castle (R-DE), and Tom Latham (R-IA). The bill was modeled after the successful Department of Defense program called Troops to Teachers. The goal of the program is to increase the number of nurse faculty members so schools of nursing may expand enrollments and alleviate the ongoing shortage. The TNT program offers: a fellowship program for Commissioned Officers with a graduate degree in nursing; a scholarship program for Commissioned Officers who have served at least 20 years of active duty as a nurse and are eligible for retirement; a transitional assistance program for

Commissioned Officers of the Nurse Corps who have served at least 20 years and are already qualified to teach; and a program for retired Nurse Corps Officers who can serve as full-time faculty in a accredited school of nursing. The bill has been referred the House Armed Services Committee.

**Veterans' Medical Personnel Recruitment and Retention Act of 2008 (S. 2969)** was introduced on May 1, 2008 and sponsored by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI). AACN specifically supports Section 4 of the bill which would reinstate the Health Professionals Education Assistance Scholarship Program which expired on December 31, 1998. The reauthorization of this program is vital to addressing the workforce demands in Veteran's Affairs (VA) facilities. By providing tuition, a book allowance, and a monthly stipend to healthcare professionals in exchange for two years of service at a VA facility, the program seeks to create an adequate supply of healthcare professionals, the most critical being nurses. Also, Section 4 would create a Loan Repayment Program for Clinical Researchers from Disadvantaged Backgrounds. This program would provide educational loan repayment for qualified health professionals engaged in clinical research at the Veterans Health Administration and encourage greater numbers of nurses to pursue clinical research careers. The bill was referred to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee where it was reported out favorably.

**Veterans' Medical Personnel Recruitment and Retention Act of 2008 (H.R. 6153)** was introduced on May 22, 2008 and sponsored by Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Corrine Brown (D-FL), Michael Burgess (R-TX), Lois Capps (D-CA), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), and Ciro Rodriguez (D-TX). AACN specifically supports Section 4 of the bill which would reinstate the Health Professionals Education Assistance Scholarship Program which expired on December 31, 1998. The reauthorization of this program is vital to addressing the workforce demands in Veteran's Affairs (VA) facilities. By providing tuition, a book allowance, and a monthly stipend to healthcare professionals in exchange for two years of service at a VA facility, the program seeks to create an adequate supply of healthcare professionals, the most critical being nurses. Also, Section 4 would create a Loan Repayment Program for Clinical Researchers from Disadvantaged Backgrounds. This program would provide educational loan repayment for qualified health professionals engaged in clinical research at the Veterans Health Administration and encourage greater numbers of nurses to pursue clinical research careers. The bill was referred to the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

**Nurses' Higher Education and Loan Repayment Act of 2008 (H.R. 6652)** was introduced on July 30, 2008 and sponsored by Reps. Tom Latham (R-IA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU), Corrine Brown (D-FL), G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), Lois Capps, RN (D-CA), Phil English (R-PA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), Ron Kind (D-WI), Michael McNulty (D-NY), John Sarbanes (D-MD), and Christopher Smith (R-NJ). The legislation would provide current students and graduates of nursing master's and doctoral programs with reimbursement for student loans. If selected to participate in this program, these nurses would be required to teach for four years in an accredited school of nursing. The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

**Health Workforce Investment Act of 2008 (H.R. 7065)** was introduced on September 25, 2008 and sponsored by Reps. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), Lois Capps (D-CA), Jim McGovern (D-MA), and Jerry Moran (R-KS). The legislation would establish a National Center for Health Workforce Information and Analysis, a National Health Workforce Advisory Council, a State Health Workforce Investment Grant program, and a Health Workforce Innovations Research set aside. The programs will assist in gathering data and approaching the shortages in all health professions in a way that is systematic and comprehensive. Specifically, the State Workforce Investment Grant program will allow states to direct additional federal funding into programs that are working to address the state's workforce challenges. The reservation of 25% of these funds for nursing programs will expand the pipeline of new nurses and strengthen our entire healthcare system. Finally, the Health Workforce Innovations Research set aside will provide necessary guidance, innovation, and technical assistance to future programs addressing the shortages in the health professions, including nursing. The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.