



The following brief report highlights the progress of AACN's legislative priorities for the month of February 2008.

Budget and Appropriations for Title VII and VIII of the Public Health Service Act

On February 4, President Bush released his FY 2009 budget request. For the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [PSA]), the President has proposed a 30 percent reduction in funding. This is a \$46.2 million decrease from the FY 2008 level (\$156.05 million). Similar to his FY 2008 budget request, the President is calling for the elimination of the Advanced Education Nursing grants. In FY 2007, these grant provided individual traineeships and programmatic support to 16,092 graduate nursing students. AACN issued a press release in response to the President's budget which may be found at:

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Media/NewsReleases/2008/09Budget.htm>

For FY 2009, AACN, along with the larger nursing community, is supporting a \$200 million "ask" for the Title VIII programs. On Monday, February 25, Representatives Lois Capps (D-CA) and Steve LaTourette (R-OH) circulated their "Dear Colleague" Letter requesting \$200 million for Title VIII in FY 2009. Thus far, 27 Representatives have signed the letter. Please scroll down to the bottom of this email to see if your Representative has supported this request.

This year, AACN would like to work with the larger community to obtain over 200 signatures on this letter. For more information on how you, your students and faculty can help with this initiative, see:

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/alerts.htm>

The President's budget is calling for a complete elimination of funding for the Health Professions Education Programs (Title VII of the PSA), which would endanger the nation's ability to provide necessary health care services, especially to vulnerable populations. Cutting programs that support the preparation of physicians, pharmacists and other health professionals will likely limit the nation's supply of health care providers and add to the growing issue of health disparities and access to quality health care.

Title VIII Reauthorization

The nursing community has been notified by Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) that the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will begin the reauthorization of Title VIII this session and requested a consensus document outlining the community's priorities for the reauthorization. AACN and the larger nursing community have developed this document. It will be open to the public soon, but the overarching priority was increased funding for the Title VIII programs.

Higher Education Act (HEA) Reauthorization

On February 7, the House passed the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007 (H.R. 4137) which extends and expands the Higher Education Act of 1965. For nursing, this bill includes Representative Carolyn McCarthy's (D-NY) language from:

- The *Nurse Faculty Higher Education Act* that awards pilot project grant money for partnerships between an accredited school of nursing and a hospital or other health facility.
- The *Increasing Education Opportunities for Nurses and Nurse Faculty Act* that was first introduced by Sens. Mikulski and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and creates capitation grants for schools of nursing.

- The *Teacher Nurse Support Act* that would expand loan forgiveness programs for teachers and nurses.
- Additionally, Rep. McCarthy worked to include the language introduced by Sen. Mikulski that would secure funding for nursing education under the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program.

Representatives Rush Holt (D-NJ) and Peter Welch (D-VT) also included language to support nursing which was incorporated as a part of the Manager's Amendment. This language was from the Nursing School Capacity Act, which Rep. Holt has introduced in both the 109th and 110th Congresses. 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. For more information on this language, see:

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/pdf/LOSFeb08.pdf>
<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.04137>:

On February 25, H.R. 4137 was referred to the Senate. Now, the House and Senate conferees will work to negotiate the differences between the two bills. AACN will advocate for the inclusion of the nursing language mentioned above in the final bill.

Troops to Nurse Teachers (TNT)

This year, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) will be introducing the Troops to Nurse Teachers Program as a stand-alone bill. The date of introduction is today, March 4. AACN worked with the larger nursing community to develop a letter of support for this bill and 28 nursing organizations signed on in support. AACN will also host a military nurse shortage briefing on April 8, in the Capitol Building. Major General Gale Pollock, Chief of the Army Nurse Corps, is a confirmed presenter. For more information on this briefing, please contact Suzanne Begeny at sbegeny@aacn.nche.edu or 202-463-6930, ext. 247.

AACN's Spring Meeting: Capitol Hill Visits and Reception

If you are attending the AACN Spring Meeting (March 29-April 1) in Washington, DC, we urge you to schedule meetings with your legislators' key health care staff on either the afternoon of Monday, March 31 or the afternoon of Tuesday, April 1. This year, the AACN Business Meeting has been moved earlier in the day to accommodate Capitol Hill visits, as they are an essential part to furthering AACN's legislative goals that benefit all member institutions.

AACN State Grassroots Liaisons will schedule meetings with Senators on behalf of all the deans and directors in the state. However, you will need to schedule a meeting with your Representative. To obtain contact information for members of the House of Representatives, visit: <http://www.house.gov/>. If you have questions about setting up your meetings, please contact Gene Throwe at 202-463-6930, x237.

Additionally, those who make Hill visits will be invited to the Capitol Hill Reception. During the Fall 2007 meeting, five Members of Congress attended this reception to meet and greet with AACN Deans and Directors! To view the fun had at last year's reception, see:

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/pdf/07SGLReception.pdf>

Representatives who have signed-on to the Title VIII Dear Colleague Letter

- 1.) Allen (D-ME)
- 2.) Baldwin (D-WI)
- 3.) Berman (D-CA)
- 4.) Capps (D-CA)
- 5.) Carney (D-PA)
- 6.) Cummings (D-MD)
- 7.) English (R-PA)

- 8.) Harman (D-CA)
- 9.) Herseth Sandlin (D-SD)
- 10.) Hinchey (D-NY)
- 11.) Johnson, EB (D-TX)
- 12.) LaTourette (R-OH)
- 13.) McCarthy, Carolyn (D-NY)
- 14.) McDermott (D-WA)
- 15.) Miller (D-NC)
- 16.) Price (D-NC)
- 17.) Ross (D-AR)
- 18.) Sarbanes (D-MD)
- 19.) Schakowsky (D-IL)
- 20.) Schwartz (D-PA)
- 21.) Shea-Porter (D-NH)
- 22.) Sutton (D-OH)
- 23.) Taylor (D-MS)
- 24.) Towns (D-NY)
- 25.) Waxman (D-CA)
- 26.) Welch (D-VT)
- 27.) Wu (D-OR)