



The following brief report highlights where AACN's legislative priorities stand at the beginning of the second session of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress.

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

Before Congress broke for the holiday recess, they prepared a large omnibus spending bill (H.R. 2764). The programs within the amended omnibus package did receive cuts. For the Labor, Health, and Human Services, and Education (LHHS-ED) programs, the new omnibus package proposed specific adjustments to the original conference agreement, as well as an across-the-board rescission of 1.75%.

When the LHHS-ED conference report was amended, the new funding level for Title VIII (Nursing Workforce Development programs) dropped to \$158.82 million. With the 1.75% reduction, the funding for Title VIII in FY 2008 is \$156.05 million. This is a \$6.37 million increase from FY 2007 (\$149.68 million). Of specific interest to AACN's overarching legislative priority to address the nurse faculty shortage, the Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) received \$7.86 million, a \$3.09 million increase from last year. Additionally, the Advanced Education Nursing (AEN) programs received \$61.88 million, a \$4.8 million increase from FY 2007. While the Title VIII programs received an overall increase due to the boost in funding for the NFLP and AEN programs, the remaining four authorities unfortunately received decreases from last year's funding level. These cuts reflect the 1.75% rescission. For more information on these programs, see:

<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/pdf/FY2008FundingChart.pdf>

Congress passed H.R. 2764 and the President signed the omnibus spending package for FY 2008 into law on December 19, 2007.

Reports from the Office of Management and Budget suggest that the President's Budget for FY 2009 will be similar to last year and will include cuts to Titles VII and VIII. The President's Budget will be released on Monday, February 4, 2008.

On January 29, 2008, the nursing community met to discuss the FY 2009 funding recommendations for Title VIII and have tentatively agreed to a \$200 million ask for these programs. This sum is supported by the House and Senate nursing champions, Representatives Lois Capps (D-CA) and Steve LaTourette (R-OH) and Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Susan Collins (R-ME).

### ***Title VIII Reauthorization***

The nursing community has been notified by Senator Mikulski that the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will begin the reauthorization of Title VII and Title VIII this session. AACN will work with the larger nursing community to develop a consensus document of guiding principles for the Title VIII reauthorization.

### ***Higher Education Reauthorization (HEA)***

On November 15, 2007, the House Education and Labor Committee passed their amendments to HEA through the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007 (H.R. 4137). For nursing, this bill includes Rep. 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) in the Senate and creates capitation grants for schools of nursing.
- The *Teacher Nurse Support Act* that would expand loan forgiveness programs for teachers and nurses.
- The language introduced by Sen. Mikulski that would secure funding for nursing education under the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program.

While H.R. 4137 has been filed, it has yet to be scheduled for a full House vote. The projected date that the House will take up this bill is the week of February 4, 2008. Once the vote occurs, a conference will begin between the House and Senate to come to a final compromise. AACN will work to ensure that the above nursing language remains in the final bill.

### ***Troops to Nurse Teachers (TNT)***

During House and Senate negotiations for the final Defense Authorization Conference Agreement (H.R. 1585), the TNT program, as written, was not included. However, the conference report created a study to investigate the feasibility of a "Retired Troops to Nurse Teachers" program. The Department of Defense (DOD) would like to determine if a TNT program would be beneficial to the military. The inclusion of this study is a positive step in the direction of passing the TNT program. Last year, there was no mention of the TNT program in either the final DOD appropriations or authorization bill. This year, AACN is glad to see that progress has been made on this initiative.

### ***AACN's 2008 Government Affairs Goals***

AACN's Board of Director's approved the Government Affairs Committee's Goals for 2008. For more information on these goals see: <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/pdf/Goals08.pdf>