

Health and Education Legislation in the 111th Congress

Each Congress, AACN works on a bipartisan basis with Congressional staff and Legislators to promote and advance nursing education, research, and other priorities of interest to AACN's membership. The list below provides an overview of supported legislation in which AACN staff has assisted in the drafting process or has offered support based on the priorities set forth by AACN's legislative agenda.

The Medicare Graduate Nursing Education Act (S. 1569) was introduced on August 3, 2009 and sponsored by Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Mark Begich (D-AK), and Daniel Inouye (D-HI). The legislation would amend Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide payment to hospitals for the costs of expanded advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) training programs. A graduate nursing education program, like the one in S. 1569, would reimburse hospitals, which have affiliations with schools of nursing and community-based care settings, for the direct and indirect costs associated with APRN clinical education. This funding also will be allocated to pay the schools and community based-care settings for the cost of their educational activities. The bill has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

The Medicare Graduate Nursing Education Act (H.R. 3185) was introduced on July 13, 2009 and sponsored by Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA). The legislation would amend Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide payment to hospitals for the costs of expanded advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) training programs. A graduate nursing education program, like the one in H.R. 3185, would reimburse hospitals, which have affiliations with schools of nursing and community-based care settings, for the direct and indirect costs associated with APRN clinical education. This funding also will be allocated to pay the schools and community based-care settings for the cost of their educational activities. The bill has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

The Women's Medical Home Demonstration Act (S. 1303) was introduced on June 18, 2009 and sponsored by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ). The legislation would provide an opportunity to determine the utility of a women's health medical home. The bill would establish a three-year medical home demonstration program focusing on women's health issues in eight states, within geographically diverse areas and a mix of practice settings. This project would inform the redesign of the health care delivery system for women to provide targeted, accessible, continuous, coordinated, confidential and comprehensive care. The bill has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

Evidence-Based Home Visitation Act (S. 1267) was introduced on June 16, 2009 and sponsored by Sens. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Robert Casey (D-PA), and Tom Carper (D-DE). The bill would provide critical home visitation services to low-income children and families who experience the greatest risk of health, educational and economic disparities that have lasting negative impacts. The bill has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

Medicare Transitional Care Act of 2009 (H.R. 2773) was introduced on June 9, 2009 and sponsored by Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Charles Boustany (R-LA), Eric Massa (D-NY), Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-SD), and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). The bill would establish a program that calls specifically on nurses or other qualified health professionals to provide transitional care services for Medicare patients upon hospital discharge. This support would include a comprehensive pre-discharge consultation with the patient and caregiver, the collaborative development of an evidence-based plan for transitional care, a mandatory home visit 24-hours after discharge, coordination of services, and accompaniment on follow-up physician visits. The legislation would reduce costly rehospitalizations by ensuring patients and caregivers are informed by and have the assistance of a nurse or other health care professional to navigate the complex treatment needs. The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees.

ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING

Preserving Patient Access to Primary Care Act of 2009 (S. 1174) was introduced on June 3, 2009 and sponsored by Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Arlen Specter (D-PA). This legislation would maintain patient choice when selecting a healthcare provider. This bill would include nurse practitioners as a leader in the medical home model, thereby recognizing these providers' expertise in comprehensive care coordination, chronic disease management, and health promotion activities. The bill would also expand loan repayment for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses who serve in a primary care setting in underserved areas. The bill has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

Nurse Managed Health Clinic (NMHC) Investment Act of 2009 (S. 1104) was introduced on May 20, 2009 and sponsored by Sens. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Edward Kaufman (D-DE). 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.

Preserving Patient Access to Primary Care Act of 2009 (H.R. 2350) was introduced on May 12, 2009 and sponsored by Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-PA) with 117 other cosponsors. This legislation would maintain patient choice when selecting a healthcare provider. This bill would include nurse practitioners as a leader in the medical home model, thereby recognizing these providers' expertise in comprehensive care coordination, chronic disease management, and health promotion activities. The bill would also expand loan repayment for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses who serve in a primary care setting in underserved areas. The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor Committees.

Nurses' Higher Education and Loan Repayment Act of 2009 (S. 1022) was introduced on May 12, 2009 and sponsored by Sens. Evan Bayh (D-IN), Mark Begich (D-AK), Roland Burris (D-IL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Carl Levin (D-MI), Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Benjamin Nelson (D-NE), Mark Warner (D-VA), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). 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 Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

The Nurse Education, Expansion and Development (NEED) Act (H.R. 2043) was introduced on April 22, 2009 and sponsored by Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY). The NEED Act would provide capitation or formula grants based on enrollment to schools of nursing. Funds could be used for hiring new or retaining current faculty, purchasing educational equipment, enhancing clinical laboratories, repairing and expanding infrastructure, or recruiting students. The bill was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Health Workforce Investment Act of 2009 (H.R. 1946) was introduced on April 2, 2009 and sponsored by Reps. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), Carolyn Kilpatrick (D-MI), 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. These programs would assist in gathering data and find systematic and comprehensive solutions to shortages in all health professions. Specifically, the State Workforce Investment Grant program would allow states to direct additional federal funding into programs that are working to address the state's workforce challenges. Twenty-five percent of these funds would be reserved for nursing programs to help expand the pipeline of new nurses and strengthen our entire healthcare system. Finally, the Health Workforce Innovations Research set aside would provide the 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.

Nurses' Higher Education and Loan Repayment Act of 2009 (H.R. 1460) was introduced on March 12, 2009 and sponsored by Reps. Tom Latham (R-IA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Christopher Smith (R-NJ), Gene Taylor (D-MS), David Loebsack (D-IA), Phil Hare (D-IL), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Michael McMahon (D-NY), Michael Michaud (D-ME), Charles Rangel (D-NY), Patrick Murphy (D-PA), Dennis Moore (D-KS), and Bart Gordon (D-TN). The legislation would provide reimbursement for student loans to current students and graduates of nursing master's and doctoral programs. 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.

The Nurse Education, Expansion and Development (NEED) Act (S. 497) was introduced on February 26, 2009 and sponsored by Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL). The NEED Act would provide capitation or formula grants based on enrollment to schools of nursing. Funds would be used for hiring new or retaining current faculty, purchasing educational equipment, enhancing clinical laboratories, repairing and expanding infrastructure, or recruiting students. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Retooling the Health Care Workforce for an Aging America Act of 2009 (S. 245) was introduced on January 14, 2009 and sponsored by Sens. Herb Kohl (D-WI), Robert Casey (D-PA), and Blanche Lincoln (D-AR). The bill offers a comprehensive approach to address the shortage of health professionals with an expertise in gerontology. Specifically for nursing, Section 121 of Subtitle B would help prepare nurses to care for the older population by amending and expanding the Comprehensive Geriatric Education Program in Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act. This support would provide traineeships for individuals pursuing advanced degrees in geriatric nursing. The bill has been referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.