



To: AACN Board of Directors

From: Dr. Jane Kirschling, Chair
Government Affairs Committee

Date: January 14, 2005

Re: Discussion Draft of 2005 GAC Priorities for AACN Advocacy Efforts

The Government Affairs Committee (GAC) and AACN staff have identified the issues below as AACN's legislative priorities for the first session of the 109th Congress, and requests board endorsement. Recommended issues are listed in priority order and the GAC suggests that energy and resources are to be directed in that order. AACN staff will report on the top five priorities at meetings and in Board Reports unless there is action on issues of lesser priority. **The designation of "Lead", "Actively Participate", and "Monitor" are given to identify AACN staff, GAC, and membership level of involvement on each issue. They are defined as follows:**

Lead - Take a prominent position for AACN on the Hill and in the Federal Agencies. Efforts may include evaluating legislation, signing on to supportive bills, actively lobbying and leading efforts in coalition, signing on to coalition letters, and developing and implementing a grassroots strategy in support of these issues.

Actively Participate - Take a position on issues, but work within the nursing community allowing another organization to take the leadership role. Efforts may include signing on to legislation, attending coalition meetings, and signing on to coalition letters. Minimal efforts will be spent on evaluating/analyzing legislation and grassroots dissemination strategy.

Monitor - Invest minimal efforts to stay aware of issues. Sign on to coalition letters and minimal attendance at meetings. No grassroots efforts involved.

1. Public Health Service Act Title VII and VIII Budget and Appropriations

Lead in increasing funding levels for Title VII and VIII programs, particularly the Nursing Workforce Development programs, Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, Area Health Education Centers, and Curriculum Development and Training Grants for Preparedness. Advocate for a significant funding increase for these programs for FY 2006. Note there has been almost a doubling of the budget for Nursing Workforce Development programs between FY 2001 and FY 2005. In FY 2006, the President has been quoted as working towards a one percent increase in all non-defense, non-homeland security programs and cutting the federal deficit in half over the next five years. With military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, needs for increased homeland security, and now tsunami relief, it is shaping up to be the most challenging budget year

in several decades. AACN will: Attend meetings and participate in the work of various coalitions in the nursing community and the health community such as the Nursing Network, Tri-Council for Nursing, Coalition for Health Funding, Friends of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC). Increase the membership and visibility of the House Nursing Caucus. Engage in strategic educational efforts with the National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice (NACNEP), Division of Nursing, and other pertinent HRSA divisions. Identify appropriate nursing education initiatives to lobby for as report language in House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) appropriations bills, and conference reports. Host Hill staff luncheon briefing on funding for nursing education programs. Develop grassroots strategy, member letters for website, and talking points to address appropriations. *(This is an annual effort and ongoing AACN priority. AACN consultants, Wheat Government Relations, will focus efforts on the staff briefing and devise report language for special federal initiatives.)*

2. Funding for National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)

Lead in advocating for a budget increase for FY 2006. NINR reached its doubling over five years in FY 2003 along with the rest of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). However, the NIH remains under congressional scrutiny due to controversies surrounding conflicts of interest among leading researchers, stem cell research and cloning efforts, and research projects addressing human sexuality. Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Joe Barton (R-TX) has announced plans to reauthorize NIH for the first time since the early 1990s furthering the agency's woes. AACN will: Participate in the executive committee of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding and other advocacy efforts with Research America!, Coalition for Health Funding, House Nursing Caucus, and Tri-Council for Nursing. Identify appropriate nursing research initiatives to lobby for as report language in House, Senate, and conference reports. Continue to take a leadership role with the Friends of NINR and attend National Advisory Council on Nursing Research (NACNR) meetings. *(This is an annual effort and ongoing AACN priority. Wheat Government Relations will focus efforts here and devise report language for special federal initiatives.)*

3. Capitation Grants Legislation (New Goal)

Lead in advocating for new Capitation Grants authorizing legislation. In 2004, the Nurse Education, Expansion, and Development Act (H.R. 5324) was introduced in the House as a placeholder. The lead sponsors are dedicated to introducing the legislation again in the 109th Congress. However, partisan politics and the fact that major nursing shortage authorizing legislation was passed in 2002 makes it a challenge to pass new authorizing legislation for the foreseeable future. AACN will: Assist in finding strong sponsors in the Senate and additional cosponsors in the House. Lobby members of the appropriate committees for consideration. Host tours at schools of nursing for Hill staff. Develop grassroots strategy, member letters for website, and talking points. Work with other nursing and health care organizations to achieve this goal. *(This has been a major priority for AACN member schools.)*

4. AACN Member Education

Lead in maintaining and developing effectiveness of the State Grassroots Liaison Program, the grassroots structure that capitalizes on the relationships of AACN members with their federal legislators. Provide services and programs for AACN members stressing the importance of

political, legislative, and regulatory advocacy on the federal and state levels in the deanship role. Build AACN members' knowledge and skills to focus on funding for nursing education in programs operated on the state level such as Medicaid GME, Workforce Investment Act, and other special projects, etc. Work with outside organizations such as National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and American Nurses Association (ANA) to achieve these goals. *(AACN members must also leverage change at the state level. There is need for additional member education on strategy development, lobbying techniques, and nursing education funding.)*

5. Department of Veterans Affairs (Moved from Emerging Issue to #5)

Lead in support of nursing education at the Department of Veterans Affairs. AACN will: support implementation of the VA Nursing Commission recommendation that the VA "establish national policy guidance for schools of nursing comparable to the medical school model in *Policy Memorandum 2* (1946), and actively promote nursing school affiliations, as well as with other health profession educational institutions as appropriate." Encourage a Nurse Officers-to-Educators program within the VA to utilize GI Bill benefits for additional nursing education to develop nurse faculty. Preserve the career ladder and educational opportunities at the VA's Nurse Qualification Standard and its supportive funding for nursing education. *(Over the last two years, AACN has invested time and resources in opposing legislation that would eliminate the VA Nurse Qualification Standard.)*

6. Patient Safety (Moved from #5 to #6)

Actively Participate in appropriations funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and seek opportunities for nursing education and research. Patient safety legislation is now in its sixth year of discussion in Congress. Both chambers have passed bills that will need to be reintroduced in the 109th Congress and conferenced to resolve differences. AACN will: Monitor patient safety legislation and regulation for opportunities for colleges of nursing. Participate in the Friends of AHRQ Coalition. Lobby for increased FY 2006 funding. *(AACN advocacy efforts for AHRQ funding have increased. Many AACN Initiatives such as the Clinical Nurse Leader, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Achieving Competence Today-II, and the AACN-UHC Residency Program focus on patient safety.)*

7. Develop Nursing Leaders in Policy, Legislation, and Regulation

Actively Participate in sponsoring nurse interns, in speaking engagements for external audiences such as Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows, in facilitating AACN members' participation in the Nurse in Washington Internship Program, and host student groups from colleges of nursing. Nominate AACN members and nurse leaders to positions on federal advisory boards and committees regarding health and education issues. *(AACN has an ongoing role in developing member's health and education policy interest and expertise.)*

8. Higher Education Act Reauthorization

Actively Participate in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). The higher education community moved ahead in 2003 to address the pertinent issues for reauthorization and in 2004 the House passed a series of bills, while the Senate did not even introduce legislation addressing reauthorization. It is likely that both chambers will act on HEA reauthorization this year since many initiatives are priorities for President Bush. AACN will: Work with FASHP and the American Council on Education coalitions to follow developments in the reauthorization

process. Follow up on the idea of expanding the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program to include nursing educators as a designated needed faculty. Develop loan forgiveness for nurses and nurse faculty similar to that for teachers. Evaluate the potential to achieve a three semester Stafford loan program exclusively for student nurses. (*Wheat Government Relations will address GAANN and other HEA initiatives in FY 2006.*)

9. Medicare Graduate Medical Education (GME) (Moved from Monitor to Actively Participate) **Actively Participate** in establishing Medicare funding for post-baccalaureate residency programs. Now in its fifth year, the AACN-UHC Residency Program is developed to the point where AACN must pursue funding for a demonstration project through Section 646 of the Medicare Modernization Act or through other mechanisms at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). AACN will: Work with interested parties such as Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations to advance this initiative in at CMS. Meet with various CMS and HHS staff and agency heads to promote the AACN-UHC initiative. Participate in quarterly MedPAC meetings to address emerging issues that may affect nursing education. (*AACN continues to work with the advanced practice nursing community to evaluate whether it is a good time to address funding for nursing in GME.*)

10. Diversity (Moved from #6 to #10)

Actively Participate in coalitions and other collective efforts to promote the need of a diverse nursing workforce in Title VII and VIII Public Health Service Act programs and NIH research programs. The Sullivan Commission completed its work in 2004. In light of the congressional agenda for this session, it is unlikely that any new authorizing legislation will be addressed. AACN will: Work with the HPNEC, the Black Nurses Association, Hispanic Nurses Association, Friends of Indian Health, and other organizations to address issues related to creating a healthcare workforce that is sufficient to meet the needs of diverse populations. (*Diversity is a thread in all AACN legislative and policy efforts.*)

11. Reauthorization of Title VII and VIII Programs (Moved from #3 to #11 and Lead to Actively Participate) **Actively Participate** efforts with Hill staff, the nursing community, health care community, and in the appropriate federal agencies in addressing modifications and improvements to Title VII and VIII programs that were initially up for reauthorization in 2002. With the packed congressional agenda on health issues in 2005, it is unlikely that reauthorization will be addressed in this session. AACN will: Work with Federation of the Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP), Tri-Council for Nursing, Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC) and other coalitions on an expedited and rational reauthorization process. Meet with representatives of the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Research Service on reauthorization of programs. Lobby members of Congress for AACN goals in reauthorization. (*AACN initiatives such as Capitation Grants legislation may be folded into Title VIII reauthorization legislation.*)

EVALUATE EMERGING ISSUES

Throughout the year, AACN staff continuously monitor and evaluate legislation and regulations to identify emerging issues that may impact nursing education and research. Once these issues are identified, they are brought to the GAC for evaluation and recommendation for AACN Board or Executive Committee approval. Staff reevaluate priorities based on this final recommendation.