



## **AACN Statement Opposing Ballot Initiatives That May Hinder Efforts to Diversify the Nursing Workforce**

During the upcoming national election on November 4, Colorado and Nebraska residents will be asked to vote on ballot initiatives banning race and gender-conscious programming for all public, state-funded programs, including school admissions and employee recruitment practices. If passed, these measures, which are commonly referred to as “civil rights initiatives,” would directly impact programs that increase and promote diversity in higher education. In response, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate programs in nursing, has issued the following statement:

“AACN opposes any legislative efforts that would deny opportunities to students from minority populations and prevent schools from actively reaching out to groups under-represented in nursing, including men,” said AACN President Fay Raines. “AACN is pleased to join with our colleagues at the Association of American Medical Colleges in urging residents of Colorado and Nebraska to vote against these ballot initiatives that may hamper efforts to provide opportunities to students and reverse the progress being made to enhance diversity within the health professions.”

Nursing’s academic leaders understand the connection between a culturally diverse nursing workforce and the ability to provide quality patient care. Minority nurses are leaders in the development of models of care that address the unique needs of diverse populations. AACN strongly believes that health care providers and the nursing profession should reflect and value the diversity of the populations and communities they serve. Though nursing has made strides in recruiting nurses that mirror the patient population, we believe that much more must be done to diversify the nursing workforce to better serve the health care needs of all Americans.

AACN currently administers three national scholarships programs targeted at increasing diversity in the nursing student and faculty populations. For more information on these initiatives, see AACN’s fact sheet on Enhancing Diversity in the Nursing found online at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Media/FactSheets/diversity.htm>.

*AACN Board of Directors’ Statement  
Approved September 19, 2008*