

## AACN Statement of Support for Geriatric Nursing Education

The aging of the U.S. population poses one of the greatest challenges for health care and for professional nursing education programs and their graduates. By 2030, the number of Americans age 65 and up will exceed more than 72 million comprising an estimated 20% of the population (He, 2005). Collectively, older adults seek and receive the highest percentage of healthcare services (DeFrances, 2005). Registered nurses play a central role in providing essential care for this population and must be well-equipped to care for older adults.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is committed to preparing professional nurses with the skills needed to provide excellent care to older adults and their families. This important work is consistent with our efforts to improve the quality of our nation's health care by preparing a well-educated nursing workforce.

AACN believes that educating nursing students with significant course content and clinical experiences in gerontology is the key to improving the quality of nursing care for our aging population. Professional nursing students should have access to faculty with geriatric expertise and to clinical experiences in a variety of practice settings that cater to older patients across the wellness-illness continuum. Nursing programs should provide faculty with opportunities to pursue training in geriatrics and support efforts by geriatric faculty to share their expertise with fellow educators.

The AACN Board of Directors has made a long-term commitment to advancing geriatric nursing education in collaboration with The John A. Hartford Foundation and as part of the association's core activities. AACN is committed to sustaining this important work which promotes the health and well-being of older adults. Looking ahead, AACN will continue to serve the interests of the nation by providing standards and resources to schools of nursing while fostering innovation and careers in geriatric nursing education, research, and practice.

**Prepared March 28, 2008**

### References

- DeFrances, C. and Hall, M. (2005). *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005 National Hospital Discharge Survey*. Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Health Care Statistics.
- He, W., Sengupta, M., Velkoff, V., and DeBarros, K. (2005). *Current Population Reports: 65+ in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, Government Printing Office.

### Resources

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2006). *Caring for an Aging America: A Guide for Nursing Faculty*. Washington, DC.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2004). *Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Nurse Specialist Competencies for Older Adult Care*. Washington, DC; 2004.

American Association of Colleges of Nursing. (2000). *Older Adults: Recommended Baccalaureate Competencies and Curricular Guidelines for Geriatric Nursing Care*. Washington, DC.

The Geriatric Nursing Education Project [Special Issue]. (2006). *Journal of Professional Nursing*. 22(2).

The John A. Hartford Foundation Web site: <http://www.jhartfound.org>.