FY 2012 Appropriations Bill Approved by Congress

Following extended negotiations, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives reached agreement in a conference committee over fiscal year 2012 appropriations levels. On December 16, 2011, the House passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (H.R. 2055) by a vote of 296-121. The Senate took the bill up for consideration the following day and passed the final funding measure by a vote of 67-32. The legislation now awaits the President’s signature, which is expected in the coming days. The omnibus package includes funding levels for Labor, Health, and Human Services, Education (LHHS-ED) and Related Agencies programs as well as eight other appropriations bills. Of importance to AACN members, H.R. 2055 provides $231.948 million for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs (a 4.3% decrease from FY 2011). The reported conference level for the programs was $232.387 million, however, an across the board rescission of 0.189% was enacted for all LHHS-ED discretionary programs. The bill provides $144.769 million for National Institutes of Nursing Research (NINR) (a 0.27% increase from FY 2011) when the rescission percent is included. Below is a summary of the funding levels by individual programs of interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nursing Programs</th>
<th>Conference Levels</th>
<th>Level with 0.189% Rescission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Education Nursing</td>
<td>$64.046 million</td>
<td>$63.925 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Same as FY 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention</td>
<td>$39.653 million</td>
<td>$39.578 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Same as FY 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Workforce Diversity</td>
<td>$16.009 million</td>
<td>$15.979 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Same as FY 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program</td>
<td>$83.292 million</td>
<td>$83.135 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-$10 million from FY 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Geriatric Education</td>
<td>$4.539 million</td>
<td>$4.530 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Same as FY 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Faculty Loan Program</td>
<td>$24.848 million</td>
<td>$24.801 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Same as FY 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal, Title VIII</td>
<td>$232.387 million</td>
<td>$231.948 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-$10 million from FY 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Managed Health Centers-Grant Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NINR</td>
<td>$145.043 million (+$662,000 from FY 2011)</td>
<td>$144.769 million (+$388,000 from FY 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title VII Health Professions Programs</td>
<td>$233.26 million (-$18.9 million from FY 2011)</td>
<td>$233.26 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)</td>
<td>$369 million (-$3 million from FY 2011)</td>
<td>$368.3 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NMHC can still receive Title VIII dollars
In light of the difficult financial climate, AACN will continue to educate Congress on the dire need for federal support of nursing education and research programs.

For further information, see: [http://appropriations.senate.gov/news.cfm?method=news.view&id=c77b528b-623c-405f-8b54-55f076cf4605](http://appropriations.senate.gov/news.cfm?method=news.view&id=c77b528b-623c-405f-8b54-55f076cf4605)

For more information on AACN’s appropriations advocacy, see: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/appropriations](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/appropriations).

**AACC N Responds to *Health Affairs* Article**

This month, *Health Affairs* released an article titled “Registered Nurse Supply Grows Faster than Projected Amid Surge in New Entrants Ages 23-26.” The article described findings of a study that examined an influx in the number of 23-26 year olds entering nursing school and the workforce as registered nurses (RNs) between 2002 and 2009. While the study suggests an increase in this cohort, the authors of the study—Drs. David Auerbach, Peter Buerhaus, and Douglas Staiger—do not conclude that the nursing shortage is over nor that the demand for nursing services will decrease in the coming years.

The need for a highly-educated nursing workforce continues to grow. AACN has developed talking points to address and clarify some of the discussion raised in the article. For example, AACN recognizes that the average age of the nursing workforce continues to increase, with the largest cohort of nurses now in their 50s. There is significant concern as to whether the number of younger nurses in the workforce will be sufficient to replace retirees. With the anticipated addition of 30 million newly insured Americans under the Affordable Care Act, the demand for nursing services grow immensely. In addition to increasing the sheer number of nurses, there will be an increased need for the number of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who can serve in primary care coordinating roles. Now, more than ever, the nursing workforce must invest itself in higher nursing education to ensure delivery of quality, evidence-based nursing care. Dr. Peter Buerhaus has provided AACN with some new comments about the article, which are included in AACN’s Talking Points response.

To view AACN’s Talking Points, see: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/TPNursingShortage.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/media-relations/TPNursingShortage.pdf)

**NHSC Data Shows Increase in APRN and PA Care Administered in Hospital Outpatient Departments**

This November, the National Health Service Core (NHSC) released data on a study examining the number of visits in hospital outpatient departments (OPDs) attended solely by a Physician Assistant (PA) or an APRN (specifically, nurse practitioners and nurse midwives) between 2008 and 2009. The study revealed that the percentage of these visits increased from 10% of total hospital OPD visits in 2000-2001 to 15% in 2008-2009. The percentage of OPD visits made by joint physician/non-physician provider teams between 2000 and 2009 held at a steady 3%.

While it was revealed that large, urban-centered teaching hospitals typically have continued to adhere to a joint physician/non-physician clinician approach to OPD visits, smaller, less urban hospitals are becoming more reliant on PAs and APRNs to provide a growing number of patients seeking primary care services. Between 2008 through 2009, APRNs and PAs were the sole care providers in 21% of general medicine visits and 19% of
obstetrical and gynecology visits in OPDs. The acuity of patients seeking care in OPDs continues to increase:

“APRNs and PAs saw a higher percentage of visits where a new problem was the major reason for the visit (22%) compared with visits for a chronic condition [routine (11%) or flare-up (14%)], or pre- or post-surgery care (6%).”

According the NHSC, there were 250,000 APRNs and 80,000 PAs in 2008. Utilizing advanced practice registered nurses is becoming increasingly crucial in rural and other underserved areas of the country. APRNs and PAs are the primary care providers for a significant number of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) recipients as well as the uninsured. The study suggests that APRNs and PAs are an effective solution to increasing access to care, particularly in smaller, non-teaching institutions and rural areas.

For full article, see: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db77.pdf

Register Now for AACN’s 2012 Student Policy Summit!

Registration for AACN’s 2012 Student Policy Summit is now open to nursing students at AACN member schools. Space is limited and is on a first-come, first-serve basis—so be sure to register early! The Student Policy Summit provides undergraduate and graduate nursing students the opportunity to congregate in Washington, DC for a three-day conference focused on nursing policy, research, and advocacy. Confirmed speakers for the conference include nursing leaders from a variety of federal divisions, such as Dr. Patricia Grady, Director of the National Institute for Nursing Research (NINR), and Dr. Ellen-Marie Whelan, Senior Advisor to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation Center. In addition to the exciting programmatic sessions, attendees will have the opportunity to visit their members of Congress with deans from their states in town for AACN’s Spring Semiannual Meeting. The deans, directors, and students will share with Congressional leaders the importance of nursing education and research as it relates to the health of our nation. Together, AACN members and students will bring one common and united advocacy message to the Hill.

AACN also offers scholarships to two exceptional students that cover the student’s airfare, accommodations, and registration fee. Scholarship essays are due Friday, January 20, 2011. For more information see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/2012_SPS_Scholarship_Application.pdf

To register online for the 2012 Student Policy Summit, visit: https://apps.aacn.nche.edu/Registration/registration.asp

For more information regarding the Summit, visit: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/2012-student-policy-summit

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for the Summit. To see the sponsorship packages, visit: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/2012_SPS_Sponsor_Packages.pdf

Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence-AACN Offer Unique Webinar Series

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence are partnering to produce a series of didactic Webinars for nursing students attending AACN’s 2012 Student Policy Summit next March. Three one-hour Webinars addressing state and federal nursing advocacy issues will be released during the final three months leading up to the Summit. By participating in this learning opportunity, nursing students from across the country will listen and engage in relevant policy and advocacy issues prior to arriving in
Washington, DC. AACN and the Jonas Center are extending the availability of these Webinars to the greater nursing community, including nurse faculty, practicing nurses, and other stakeholders.

The first Webinar, *Advocacy Actions Now!*, premiered on December 8, 2011, and featured guest speakers Frank Purcell, Senior Director, Federal Government Affairs of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists and Patrick Cooney, President of the Federal Group, Inc. Listeners received a comprehensive overview of federal nursing policy provided by the vast experience and perspectives of Mr. Purcell and Mr. Cooney. The Webinar is available to view via archive. To register for the Webinar archive:  
http://community.aacn.nche.edu/registration/register.cfm?reg=111&evt=RGA128

Registration details for the final two webinars are provided below. Each webinar session will last approximately one hour.

*The Future of Nursing and You – Friday, January 20, 2012, 12:00pm noon ET*  
Susan Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN, Senior Adviser for Nursing at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will lead this session on the Institute of Medicine’s report *Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* and review the report’s recommendations as well as the current implementation initiatives at the state and federal levels.  
To register for *The Future of Nursing and You*:  
http://community.aacn.nche.edu/registration/register.cfm?reg=88&evt=PL012012

**Making Your Message Count – Friday, February 10, 2012, 12:00pm noon ET**  
Darlene Curley, MS, RN, Executive Director of the Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence and Suzanne Miyamoto, PhD, RN, AACN Director of Government Affairs, will lead this session focusing on the importance of sending a collective message to legislators when advocating for the profession and will review lessons learned from independent and coordinated lobbying. Effective strategies for political advocacy will be shared.  
To register for *Making Your Message Count*:  
http://community.aacn.nche.edu/registration/register.cfm?reg=89&evt=PL021012

AACN and the Jonas Center encourage members to utilize these Webinars in efforts that promote policy and advocacy education to students at all levels.

**Update on Graduate Nurse Education Demonstration Program**

The Medicare Graduate Nurse Education (GNE) program (Sec. 5509) is an important part of the recently enacted *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* [Public Law 111-148]. This demonstration program is designed to provide reimbursement for the costs of clinical training for increased enrollments in APRNs programs. The law stipulates that only five hospitals will be selected for this program. These five hospitals must enter a partnership and contract with one or more schools of nursing and one or more community care centers. The total amount of available funding for the program is $200 million over a four-year period. Because this program is limited to five hospitals, $50 million will be available for reimbursement each year, or $10 million per hospital. The reimbursement can only be used for the costs of clinical training for an increased number of APRN enrollments.

It is uncertain when the request for proposals (RFP) will be released in the new year, but there is a distinct possibility that there will be a tight turn around on the RFP, possibly 45 days. AACN will continue in our efforts to provide members with clear information regarding the planned rollout and program requirements in order to facilitate your work to submit successful proposals.

**Legislation Would Authorize APRNs in Federal Employees’ Compensation Act**

Legislation recently passed in the House of Representatives would now include APRNs and PAs as providers reimbursable under the *Federal Employees’ Compensation Act* (FECA). Introduced by the House Education and the
Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline (R-MN) and Ranking Member George Miller (D-CA), The Federal Workers’ Compensation Modernization and Improvement Act (H.R 2465) recognizes APRNs and PAs as authorized certifiers of disability and would reimburse for care provided to those who sustain job-related traumatic injury. Additionally, H.R. 2465 calls for increased benefits to those suffering from head and facial disfigurement, and would compensate for disability or death sustained from terrorist activity. According to the Government Accountability Office, FECA currently covers more than 2.7 million federal employees. The bill was received by the Senate and has been referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.


**AHRQ Funding Opportunity for Primary Care Practice Research**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is accepting Center Core grant applications from organizations “with a demonstrated track record of success in conducting research in primary care practice-based research networks (PBRNs).” Applicants who are awarded will participate as a Research Center in Practice-Based Research and Learning, where providers will expect to collaborate in an interdisciplinary research environment. Of particular interest is research focused on increasing safe, high-quality care through models that propel knowledge and learning for primary care practices. Awarded funds aim to strengthen the research and dissemination infrastructure of each Center.

Eligible applicants include:
- Public or non-profit private institutions (university, college, community-based organizations).
- Units of local or State government.
- Eligible agencies of the Federal government.
- Indian/Native American Tribal Governments and designated Organizations.

*Letters of intent are due January 6, 2012. The final date for application receipt is January 26, 2012.*

For more information, see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HS-12-002.html

**AACN Congressional Reception Pictures Now Available**

On October 24, 2011, AACN hosted a Congressional Reception coinciding with the 2011 Fall Semiannual Meeting. Members of Congress and their staff had the opportunity to meet with AACN members to discuss relevant national nursing issues and how these issues are impacting their states and local districts. Guests of honor included Representative Lois Capps, RN (D-CA), Representative Andrew Harris, MD, (R-MD), Representative Howard Coble (R-NC), Major General Kimberly Siniscalchi, Assistant Air Force Surgeon General, Colonel Bruce Schoneboom, and Cathy Rick, Chief Nurse Officer of the Veterans Affairs Department.

To view reception pictures, visit: http://aacncongressionalreception.shutterfly.com/

Click on “Pictures & Videos” tab at the top of the page to view full album, then click “View Album” in lower right-hand corner.
Happy Holidays!

On behalf of the AACN Government Affairs department, we hope you have a safe and happy holiday!