2012 AACN Congressional Appreciation Awards

This year, AACN presented Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) with the AACN Congressional Appreciation Award. This award is granted annually to members of Congress who display unwavering support to advance the nursing profession. Senators Merkley and Snowe have been long time nursing champions and are both co-chairs of the Senate Nursing Caucus. Through their leadership, they have rallied support for nursing initiatives in the Senate and have collaborated with the nursing community to advance nursing education and practice. AACN’s Oregon State Grassroots Liaison Dr. Joanne Warner from University of Portland and Oregon nursing students presented Senator Merkley with his award at the AACN Congressional Reception during the Spring Meeting. Dr. Krista Meinersmann from University of Southern Maine and Dr. Barbara Higgins from Husson University presented the Senator Snowe with her award in her DC office.

2012 AACN Spring Meeting Highlights and Advocacy Updates

This March marked yet another successful AACN Spring Annual Meeting. The Government Affairs Committee program featured Aryana Khalid, Chief of Staff to Marilyn Tavenner, Acting Administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Ms. Khalid discussed with the membership her role at CMS and nursing’s role in transformative changes underway following passage of the Affordable Care Act.

The Congressional reception, co-sponsored by Representative Lois Capps, RN, (D-CA) and Representative Steven LaTourette (R-OH), was held on Monday evening at the Rayburn House Office Building. AACN members were fortunate to meet with several members of Congress in attendance, including Rep. Capps, Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD), Rep. Howard Coble (R-NC), Rep. Maize Hirono (D-HI), Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, RN (D-TX), and Rep. Walter B. Jones (R-NC). The event was a wonderful opportunity for AACN deans, directors,
and students to network with Congressional staff to discuss continued support for nursing education and research, as well as state-specific nursing issues.

To view more photos of the reception, visit: http://2012aacncongressionalreception.shutterfly.com/
Click “view album” in lower right-hand corner to view full album.

Advocacy Update
Last month, an AACN Action Alert titled, “Act Now to Protect Funding for Nursing Education and Research” was circulated among the House and the Senate. The alert asked Congress to strongly support funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs, the National Institute of Nursing Research, and Nurse-Managed Health Clinics in Fiscal Year 2013. AACN Grassroots Network members sent the alert to House Representatives, which generated a total of 188 Grassroots members sending 201 messages. The action alert was then sent to the Senate with 105 Grassroots Network members sending a total of 218 messages.

To date, AACN deans, directors, and students attending the AACN Student Policy Summit logged a total of 31 visits with Senate offices and 33 House offices during the Spring Meeting. Due in part to the collaborative efforts of AACN deans and directors, all 102 students who attended the Student Policy Summit attended at least one Hill visit.

AACN members can log their Spring Meeting visits at: http://capwiz.com/aacn/lrm/feedback.tt
GNE Demonstration Webinar Available via Archive

On Monday, April 9, 2012, AACN partnered with AARP and several APRN organizations (for complete listing, see below) to host a webinar on the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) Graduate Nursing Education (GNE) Demonstration. The solicitation for proposals was first released March 22, 2012. During the first portion of the webinar, CMMI representatives described the demonstration, which aims to increase the number of APRN students in clinical training sites and to promote primary care practice. CMS will provide reimbursement to up to five eligible hospitals that partner with schools of nursing and community-based care settings for the costs associated with APRN clinical training. The deadline for proposals is May 21, 2012.

To view the solicitation proposal, see: [http://www.innovations.cms.gov/Files/x/GNE_solicitation.pdf](http://www.innovations.cms.gov/Files/x/GNE_solicitation.pdf)

CMMI staff held a question and answer session for webinar attendees during the second portion of the webinar. Questions that were unanswered during the webinar have been sent to CMMI staff. For additional questions, please direct them to the GNE mailbox at gne@cms.hhs.gov.

To view the recorded webinar, see: [http://community.aacn.nche.edu/registration/register.cfm?reg=175&evt=RGA409](http://community.aacn.nche.edu/registration/register.cfm?reg=175&evt=RGA409)

For more information on the webinar, see: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/webinars/2012/04/09/gne](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/webinars/2012/04/09/gne)

Partnering organizations

AARP
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives

Gerontological Advanced Practices Nurses Association
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National League for Nursing
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties

Accepting Nominations for the 2012 AACN Policy Luminary Award

Each year, AACN recognizes an outstanding nursing leader for his or her public policy achievements with the AACN Policy Luminary Award. Past recipients include Dr. Mary Wakefield, Administrator of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, Dr. Mary Naylor, Marian S. Ware Professor in Gerontology at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of New Courtland Center for Transitions and Health, and Dr. Ellen-Marie Whelan, Senior Advisor at the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation. The outstanding career contributions to policy of these nurses exemplify the spirit of the AACN Policy Luminary Award.

AACN’s Government Affairs Committee is seeking nominations for this year’s award. Nominations are due by 5pm ET, Monday, September 17, 2012. Each nomination package should include two letters of recommendation from peers, the nominee’s CV, and a one page bio-sketch.

Nominations or questions should be electronically submitted to Government Affairs Coordinator Gene Throwe at gthrowe@aacn.nche.edu.

For more information, see: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/membership/awards/CallforNomPolicy.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/membership/awards/CallforNomPolicy.pdf)
The 2013 Student Policy Summit (SPS), which is open to baccalaureate and graduate students of AACN member schools, invites students to congregate in Washington, DC for a three-day conference focused on nursing’s role in health policy and advocacy. Sponsorship of AACN’s Student Policy Summit ensures that the cost of attending the Summit is affordable for all students, and the Summit is a highly rewarding experience.

Based on level of sponsorship, institutions that choose to sponsor have the opportunity to have their logo featured on Summit materials, and higher levels of sponsorship may cover the cost of registration for a limited number of students on a merit-based award.

This year’s Summit, which convened March 25-27 in Washington, DC, was a great success due largely in part to the generous support of its sponsors. In attendance were over 100 students who represented 41 schools across 23 states. AACN would once again like to thank the 2012 SPS sponsors: Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence, Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing’s Future, Pharmaceuticals Research and Manufacturers of America, Loyola University New Orleans School of Nursing, and University of Kentucky School of Nursing.

*Sponsorship opportunities are limited and are granted on a first-come, first-serve basis.*

To view sponsorship packages for the 2013 Summit, see: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/SPSSponsorPackages.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/SPSSponsorPackages.pdf)

**AACN Government Affairs Summer Internship**

AACN’s Department of Government Affairs offers a summer internship program for nurses and nursing students interested in a hands-on opportunity to learn about health policy and advocacy. The internship is based out of AACN’s office in Washington, DC, and provides selected participants with an insider’s view into the federal advocacy process and how current healthcare issues affect the nursing profession. Applicants must display strong writing skills and a desire to professionally advance a career in policy.

For more internship details, see: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/GAInternship.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/GAInternship.pdf)

Due to an increasing interest in the summer internship, a deadline has been set. Applications should be submitted to Government Affairs Coordinator, Gene Throwe, at gthrowe@aacn.nche.edu by May 11, 2012, 5pm ET.

**Nursing Scholarship Program Application Cycle Open**

The 2012 application cycle for the Nursing Scholarship Program (Title VIII of the *Public Health Service Act*) is now open. The Nursing Scholarship Program (NSP) provides financial aid to nursing students in exchange for a service commitment at an eligible health care facility located in a primary care or mental health Health Professional Shortage Area or Critical Shortage Facility. Commitments may be completed during a two-year term or on a part-time basis (see, [http://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/scholarships/Nursing/siteeligibility.html](http://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/scholarships/Nursing/siteeligibility.html) for further details). Recipients are awarded funding to cover tuition and fees, and may also receive funding to cover other reasonable costs associated with nursing education (books, clinical supplies, and a monthly stipend).
For 2012, the program is reserving a significant portion of the funds for nurse practitioner students. This is in direct response to the healthcare system’s increasing need for advanced practice registered nurses.

The NSP is highly competitive. If there are more qualified applicants than available funding, the NSP will prioritize applications based upon the level of financial need of the applicant. The application deadline is May 8, 2012, at 5pm ET.

For more information about the Nursing Scholarship Program, visit: http://www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/scholarships/Nursing/

**Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship- Funding Opportunity Announcement Changes**

On April 13, 2012, Health Resources and Services Administration’s Division of Nursing released changes to the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FAO) for the Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship (AENT) program (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act). AENT was created to “increase the number of advanced education nurses trained to practice as primary care providers and/or nursing faculty to address the nurse faculty shortage that inhibits nursing schools from educating the number of nurses need to meet demand,” and grants funding to cover the costs of tuition, books, and fees relating to advanced nurse education. Changes to the Traineeship FAO include a deadline extension and clarification of funding levels for traineeship awards.

The Division of Nursing will be hosting a webinar on **Thursday, April 19 from 1:30-2:30pm ET** to discuss these changes and address applicant questions

For additional information on the AENT and to register for the webinar, see: http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/nursing/grants/aent.html.

**ACO Contracts to Cover 375,000 Medicare Beneficiaries**

On April 10, 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that the first contracts are underway for 27 Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs).

ACOs are entities comprised of physicians, hospitals, and other health professionals who work in a team-based environment to deliver higher-quality, patient-centered care. Participation in an ACO is voluntary for providers however; CMS hopes to boost the national effort to improve coordination of care and decrease costs through examination of these models. CMS offers three types of ACO programs which differentiate how costs are shared. Several of the new ACOs will participate in the Medicare Shared Savings Program where ACOs who successfully demonstrate improved care for Fee-For-Service beneficiaries while lowering costs will garner a portion of the savings. A total of 375,000 Medicare beneficiaries across 18 states will be covered by the new agreements.

“We are encouraged by this strong start and confident that by the end of this year, we will have a robust program in place,” said CMS Acting Administrator Marilyn Tavenner.

For more information, see: https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/ACO/index.html?redirect=/ACO/

**Dr. Debra Barksdale to Chair PCORI Committee**

Debra Barksdale, PhD, RN, FAANP, has been selected as the Chair of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Scholarly Publications Committee. Established under the Affordable Care Act, PCORI is an
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independent organization that aims to help the public make informed health care decisions and improve health care delivery. PCORI’s research involves the perspectives of patients, families, caregivers, and the community to produce methodologies that are consistent with individualized care. Currently, Dr. Barksdale serves on the PCORI Board of Governors.

Dr. Barksdale’s research interests lie in disease prevention, particularly within the African-American community. As a nurse practitioner and nurse researcher, her investigative work involving stress, emotions, coping, and blood pressure in adult African-Americans emphasizes her passion for diversity education in health care. She also serves as the president-elect of the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties and is also a fellow of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners. Dr. Barksdale is an associate professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

AHRQ Preventive Services Task Force Call for Nominations

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) welcomes nominations for new members to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). The USPSTF is charged with supplying recommendations for evidence-based clinical practice for healthcare professionals and providing the American public with knowledge regarding informed healthcare decision-making. Members of the Task Force critically assess current practices in the delivery of preventive services such as screenings, health counseling, and disease reduction measures. The Task Force does not conduct its own independent research, but rather seeks to evaluate existing services for their effectiveness across different patient populations. The Task Force then develops recommendations and engages the public to provide input during this process.

USPSTF is comprised of non-Federal experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. Panel members represent a broad range of health professionals, including nurses, physicians, and other health behavior specialists. Individuals selected to serve on the Task Force are appointed by the Director and volunteer to serve a 4-year term. These members are experts in the primary care field. Task Force candidates should be well-versed in evaluating clinical effectiveness and research methodologies. To ensure that the Task Force represents a diverse community, AHRQ particularly encourages candidates from minority populations and persons with disabilities.

Applications for term starting in January 2013 must be received by May 15, 2012.


For more information regarding the nomination process, see: www.ahrq.gov/clinic/tfnomininfo.htm.