President Signs Final FY 2012 Appropriations Package

On December 23, 2011, President Obama signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 [Public Law No: 112-074]. The law provides $69.7 billion to the Department of Health and Human Services, approximately $700 million below the FY 2011 levels. Included in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (LHHS-ED) and Related Agencies section was a 0.189% across-the-board rescission to discretionary programs except the Pell Grant program. Accounting for the rescission, the law provides $231.948 million for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs (a 4.3% decrease from FY 2011) and $144.769 million for National Institutes of Nursing Research (NINR) (a 0.27% increase from FY 2011). AACN has created a summary of the appropriation levels, included in the final law, for programs of interest to the membership. For more information, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/FY12AppropChart.pdf.

The FY 2013 budget and appropriations process will begin with the release of the President’s Budget Request, which is expected in early February. AACN’s advocacy for this fiscal year starts with determining appropriate requests for programs like Title VIII and NINR with the Nursing Community and other health coalitions. Conversations related to FY 2013 will need to focus on numerous factors including the implications of the Budget Control Act [Public Law No: 112-25]. As reported earlier in 2011, the Budget Control Act of 2011 created limits on overall discretionary budget authority starting in 2013 and extends through 2021. By a process of sequestration (automatic spending cuts), the budget authority for 2013, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), “would be reduced by $97 million.” To read a copy of the CBO report, see: http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=12670.

Given the constraints of the upcoming budget process, AACN must continue our vigorous advocacy efforts with heightened attention and an increased emphasis on grassroots outreach. For more information on AACN’s appropriations advocacy, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/appropriations.

Application Cycle Open for HRSA’s Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program

The 2012 application cycle for the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program (NELRP) is now open. Administered by the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service within HRSA, the NELRP recruits registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses to areas in critical need of nursing care. Nurses participating in NELRP qualify for financial assistance to repay a portion (up to 60%) of their educational loans in exchange for two years (third year optional for an additional 25%) of full-time service at a Critical Shortage Facility or at an eligible school of nursing as nurse faculty. NELRP has been modified to include nurse faculty to help alleviate the shortage, thereby boosting nursing school enrollment.

HRSA will host a webinar to review the application process for the 2012 Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program on January 20, 2012 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm ET. To participate in this webinar, see the call-in information below.
Call-in number: 888-790-2037; Passcode: 5564361
Click on the link below to go directly to the online presentation and enter your name when prompted:
https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/nelrp/.

Deadline for applications is February 15, 2012; applicants will be notified of award by October 31, 2012.

For more information on the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program, visit:

For more information regarding the application process, visit:

AACN’s 2012 Student Policy Summit
Scholarship Application Deadline Quickly Approaches!

AACN is offering scholarships to two exceptional students that cover the student’s airfare, accommodations, and registration fee for the 2012 Student Policy Summit. The Summit offers undergraduate and graduate nursing students the opportunity to congregate in Washington, DC for a three-day conference focused on nursing policy, research, and advocacy. Students chosen to receive a scholarship will have their application essay featured in the conference materials for the Summit and made available to participants in AACN’s Spring Annual Meeting. Scholarship submissions are by 5 pm ET on Friday, January 20, 2012. The scholarship winner will be announced in mid-February 2012.

For application information visit: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/2012_SPS_Scholarship_Application.pdf.

For more information regarding the Summit, visit:

Registration and sponsorship opportunities for AACN’s 2012 Student Policy Summit are open to AACN member schools and their students. AACN is excited to have a number of nursing leaders from a variety of federal divisions confirmed to speak at the Summit including, Dr. Patricia Grady, Director of the National Institute for Nursing Research, Dr. Ellen-Marie Whelan, Senior Advisor to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation Center, and Dr. Julie Sochalski, Director of Division of Nursing at Health Resources and Services Administration. A highlight of the conference for Summit attendees is visiting with members of Congress to discuss issues vital to nursing education, research, and practice with nursing school deans and directors from their state.

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

Sponsoring the Summit will provide an opportunity to showcase your institution to our attendees. The generous support of sponsors will ensure this Summit is affordable for students and is a successful learning experience. All sponsorship requests should be submitted by February 1, 2012.

To view sponsorship packages, visit: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/2012_SPS_Sponsor_Packages.pdf.
Webinar Series Features Nursing Policy and Advocacy

The Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence has joined with AACN to offer a series of Webinars for nursing students attending AACN’s 2012 Student Policy Summit this March. Three one-hour Webinars addressing state and federal nursing advocacy issues will be released during the final 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 opening up these Webinars to the greater nursing community, including nurse faculty, practicing nurses, and other stakeholders. The next Webinar in the series features Dr. Susan Hassmiller, Senior Adviser for Nursing at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, who will lead a discussion on the Institute of Medicine’s report *Future of Nursing* and its support for the advancement of nursing.

Registration details for the final two Webinars are provided below. Each 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

**Archived: Advocacy Actions Now!**
The first Webinar in this series was held 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. To access this session via AACN’s Webinar archive: http://community.aacn.nche.edu/registration/register.cfm?reg=111&evt=RGA128.

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

**PCORI Methodology Committee Seeks Request for Information**

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), an independent organization dedicated to engaging the patient experience in research affecting healthcare decision-making and care delivery, is seeking input on the development of a draft translational table framework to guide patient-centered research. The translational table will serve as a reference for determining which research methods are best suited to examine specific comparative clinical effectiveness of a wide spectrum of research questions. PCORI’s Methodology Committee is appointed to undertake the development of this proposed translational table.
The Methodology Committee welcomes stakeholders’ input through a Request for Information (RFI) on continuing the development of a current draft translational table. More specifically, the RFI seeks responses addressing the current proposed framework, or alternately a different framework, how the framework will be relevant in varying research domains, as well as possible benefits or limitations of the draft framework. PCORI wishes to identify this draft framework’s benefits or tradeoffs through its implementation in case studies provided by RFI respondents. The Methodology Committee is scheduled to release a report to the PCORI Board of Governors in May 2012. Responses included in this report will be notified and publically acknowledged.

Responses to this RFI must be submitted electronically no later than February 17, 2012 at 5:00 PM ET.

For additional information on this opportunity, visit: http://www.pcori.org/provide-input/translation-table/.


Legislators Urge Changes to the GRANT Act

Last November, Representative James Lankford (R-OK) introduced the Grant Reform and New Transparency (GRANT) Act (H.R. 3433), which calls for higher transparency measures on behalf of federal agencies when posting federal grant opportunities. The legislation would require the Office of Management and Budget to,

“...upgrade any existing or proposed public website for finding Federal grant opportunities and applying for such grants so that such website may serve as a central point of information and provide full access for applicants for competitive grants. The website shall capture in one site, or provide electronic links to, other relevant databases.”

Additionally, federal agencies would be required to post on their website “a copy of any proposal, application, or plan submitted for the awarded grant, including any amendment to the proposal, application, or plan (whether made before or after the award of the grant).”

Several concerns have been raised regarding the proposed implications on research integrity. The bill proposes the disclosure of peer reviewers, which could jeopardize the essential element of anonymity. The National Institutes of Health and other research organizations have contended that peer reviews made public may risk the integrity of those reviews. The bill would call for making public knowledge of the selection procedures for each grant program and the processes for evaluation, ranking, and selection. Representatives Rush Holt (D-NJ) and David Price (D-NC) circulated a “Dear Colleague” letter addressed to Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CAL) urging members of the House to amend H.R 3433 before its review.

To track the progress of H.R. 3433, visit: http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/D?d112:1:./temp/~bdkSgU::|/home/LegislativeData.php.

Affordable Care Act Research Opportunity

This opportunity will provide an estimated $300,000 in grants to assist in the creation of an “interdisciplinary, multicenter research forum for scientific collaboration and infrastructure building related to home visiting research designed to improve life outcomes among mothers, infants, and young children.” The grant will fund research on the
components of effective interventions, develop methods to improve data collaboration, and foster efficient translation of research into best practice.

Some of the relevant activities sought include (but not limited to):

1. Identifying effective approaches and/or testing the effectiveness of approaches to the implementation of evidence based home visiting programs within communities;
2. Identifying gaps in necessary program enhancements and/or testing the efficacy of enhancements;
3. Determining effective program features that can improve participant recruitment/retention, including father engagement;
4. Developing approaches to screening children and families for variables highlighted as priority risk areas to be used in conjunction with home visiting models.

**Application deadline is March 5, 2012. Projected award date is July 1, 2012.**

For more information, see: [http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&oppId=137213](http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&oppId=137213).

For full grant announcement, see: [https://grants.hrsa.gov/webExternal/FundingOppDetails.asp?FundingCycleId=0EC161C8-5987-4DBA-884A-EAE6EB45A7E8&ViewMode=EU&GoBack=&PrintMode=&OnlineAvailabilityFlag=&pageNumber=&version=&NC=&Popup=](https://grants.hrsa.gov/webExternal/FundingOppDetails.asp?FundingCycleId=0EC161C8-5987-4DBA-884A-EAE6EB45A7E8&ViewMode=EU&GoBack=&PrintMode=&OnlineAvailabilityFlag=&pageNumber=&version=&NC=&Popup=).

**AHRQ Highlights Nurses Role in Care Coordination**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) released a white paper earlier this month, *Coordinating Care for Adults with Complex Care Needs in the Patient-Centered Medical Home: Challenges and Solutions*, in which Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) are identified as important agents in improving facilitation and delivery of care in the patient-centered medical home. Given the complexity of medical services needed for a large number of patients receiving home care, it is crucial that a unified approach to an individualized care plan is met by all participating providers. The paper identifies barriers to the transformation of primary care for patients with complex needs as well as strategies for disintegrating a silo approach to care. AHRQ’s outlined strategies for transforming primary care practice notes nurses as valuable health providers in this effort.

In describing the need for care that is both patient-centered and comprehensive, AHRQ states that

“Primary care clinicians typically cannot provide on their own the broad array of services often required by complex-needs patients, so medical homes may have to employ or partner with diverse teams of care providers... [and] might include physicians, advanced practice nurses, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, nutritionists, social workers, educators, and care coordinators.”

Additionally, nurse practitioners are identified as team leaders in coordinating nursing home care and home visits, thus working to extend primary care outside of the clinic setting.

To view the full report, visit: [http://pcmh.ahrq.gov/portal/server.pt/community/pcmh__home/1483/pcmh_tools__resources_patient-centered_v2](http://pcmh.ahrq.gov/portal/server.pt/community/pcmh__home/1483/pcmh_tools__resources_patient-centered_v2).