Sequestration: What’s Happening Now?
Current Discussions and Efforts to Protect Funding

With Congress and the public counting down the days until the “fiscal cliff,” discussions to address sequestration and its impact on discretionary spending, particularly non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending, will be critical if Congress is to reach a bipartisan solution. Mandated through the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 (Public Law 112-25), sequestration will impose an across-the-board cut to all federal discretionary spending in an attempt to reduce the federal deficit by $1.2 trillion. According to the most recent projection by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), this cut would translate to an 8.2% reduction to NDD programs, including healthcare and research, and will take effect beginning January 2, 2013 unless Congress can provide alternative legislation.

AACN has been involved with the Coalition for Health Funding’s (CHF) NDD United’s efforts to raise awareness among Congress and the public about the consequences sequestration will have on health care, public safety and law enforcement, housing and social services, education, and several other public sectors. NDD United advocates for a balanced approach to sequestration - one that does not make cuts to NDD funding that are disproportionate to cuts made to non-NDD funding. Recently, representatives from the NDD United community met with key members of Congress to deliver this message. For more information on the work of NDD United, visit: http://publichealthfunding.org/index.php/ndd_united1.

To access AACN’s work surrounding protection of nursing, healthcare, and medical research programs from sequestration, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/news/2012/fall-advocacy-message. AACN’s request to Congress aligns with the CHF NDD United community urging Congress to “find a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not include further cuts to non-defense discretionary programs.” Talking points which include calculations on sequestration’s impact on the Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act) are available to the membership by contacting AACN Government Affairs Manager Lauren Inouye at linouye@aacn.nche.edu or 202-463-6930 ext. 271.

Additionally, the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research has compiled a list of resources on the negative impacts sequestration will have on patients, medical research, and the economy, which can be found here: https://www.aamc.org/research/adhocgp/seqstart.htm. The site also brings together information on responses from key leaders and agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), members of Congress, and the administration. The resources come from a diverse group of stakeholders, organizations, and agencies, including the NIH, the American Heart Association, the OMB, newspapers, and many more.
For information on how to contact your legislators about the devastating effects of sequestration, see: http://capwiz.com/aacn/dbq/officials. Using this web resource you will be able to identify your legislators, find information about their voting histories and backgrounds, and their contact information.

**Apply Now for Three HRSA Funding Opportunities for FY 2013:**

**Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship Program**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is now accepting applications for the FY 2013 Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship Program. This program funds nurse anesthetist education programs to provide traineeships to support full-time nursing students in master’s or doctoral nurse anesthesia programs. The Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship Program is part of the Nursing Workforce Development programs, authorized under Title VIII of the *Public Health Service Act* (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.).

HRSA estimates they will award 80 grants through the Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship program. Schools of nursing, nursing centers, academic health centers, state or local governments, and other public or private nonprofit entities interested in administering funds from this grant can apply here: http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/GetGrantFromFedgrants;jsessionid=QMJzQrYT7ZBbtmm4sVh327n11PSQPQhpGTPHkwvNCznTvsv5ntWpHQ!-2129049045?opportunity=HRSA-13-187&agencycode=HHS-HRSA. **Applications are due December 17, 2012.**

HRSA will hold a **Technical Assistance webinar on December 6, 2012 from 12:00-2:00pm ET.** To register, see: https://www.mymeetings.com/emeet/rsvp/index.jsp?customHeader=mymeetings&Conference_ID=5218621&passcode=9471961.

For more information, see: http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=3GPSQl9GJTxVQ1zZtDJWr7k21gX2GNnb8DgTDTGcYLGlJbKHK2B4!-804278280?oppId=207093&mode=VIEW

**Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention Program**

Applications are now being accepted for the fiscal year 2013 Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention Program (NEPQR) program. Funded by HRSA, NEPQR provides grants to support projects designed to strengthen the nursing workforce, improve nurse retention rates, promote coordinated care, improve patient care quality, and provide nurses with the skills needed to practice in existing and emerging organized healthcare systems.

HRSA estimates this award will distribute approximately $10 million among 39 grantees. Schools of nursing, nursing centers, academic health centers, state or local governments, and other public or private nonprofit entities interested in administering funds from the NEPQR program can apply here: http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/GetGrantFromFedgrants;jsessionid=YbMQQzBKhf7JJRs51fbbnJp1ySg6BC8WrZrNz4ZvJGn84jLI6f26!-1238248713?opportunity=HRSA-13-188&agencycode=HHS-HRSA. **Applications are due January 25, 2013.**

HRSA will hold a **Technical Assistance webinar on December 5, 2012 from 1:30-3:00pm ET.** To register, please see: https://www.mymeetings.com/emeet/rsvp/index.jsp?customHeader=mymeetings&Conference_ID=5491853&passcode=8631619.

For more information, see: http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=QngxQzDVRLjFvZQcpw94mtL3NpdWvG5hLj8J6pvFXdM4vPFfHK8Y1!-1502138492?oppId=208173&mode=VIEW.
Advanced Nursing Education Program

HRSA is currently accepting applications for the fiscal year 2013 Advanced Nursing Education program, which funds master’s and doctoral level nursing programs that focus on caring for individuals with multiple chronic conditions with a focus on interprofessional collaboration.

HRSA estimates they will award 33 grants as part of this program. Schools of nursing, nursing centers, academic health centers, state or local governments, and other public or private nonprofit entities interested in administering funds from the Advanced Nursing Education program can apply here: http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&oppId=208393. Applications are due February 1, 2013.

HRSA will hold a Technical Assistance webinar on December 13, 2012 from 1:00 -2:30pm ET. To register, please see: https://www.mymeetings.com/emeet/rsvp/index.jsp?customHeader=mymeetings&Conference_ID=7928215&passcode=8951392.

Ada Sue Hinshaw Receives the 2012 AACN Policy Luminary Award

Ada Sue Hinshaw, PhD, RN, FAAN (left), accepts the award from Government Affairs Committee Chair Dr. Teri

AACN is pleased to announce that Ada Sue Hinshaw, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean of the Graduate School of Nursing at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, was selected as this year’s Policy Luminary Award recipient. Initiated in 2009, this honor is granted to one remarkable nurse each year whose contributions to health policy have had a lasting impact on the nursing profession. AACN members who attended the 2012 Fall Semiannual Meeting in Washington, DC had the opportunity to witness Dr. Hinshaw accept the award during a special Government Affairs Committee program session held Sunday evening, October 28.

Recognized as a groundbreaking leader in nursing research, Dr. Hinshaw has worked tirelessly to advance nursing science and elevate nursing research as a priority in healthcare policy decision-making. Dr. Hinshaw served as the first permanent director of the National Center of Nursing Research and the first director of the National Institute of Nursing Research at the National Institutes of Health. Her own personal research focuses on quality care, patient outcomes, measurement of such outcomes, and building positive work environments for nurses while ensuring patient safety. Dr. Hinshaw is a member of the Institute of Medicine and its Governing Council. A true role model, her dedication to nursing research and achieving the highest quality of patient care has transformed the nursing profession on both the practice and policy levels.

AACN Fall Meeting Advocacy Summary

AACN held a Virtual Advocacy Day for member deans, faculty, and students in conjunction with the 2012 Fall Semiannual Meeting. AACN’s message to legislators focused on the impact sequestration will have on healthcare programs, specifically highlighting the potentially devastating cuts to nursing education and research. Sequestration, mandated through the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 (Public Law 112-25), will make across-the-board cuts to all discretionary spending beginning January 2, 2013 if Congress does not provide alternative legislation. The Office of Management and Budget’s most recent projection anticipates an 8.2% cut for non-exempt, non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding.
It is vital that Members of Congress hear from their constituents on this pressing issue. During the Virtual Advocacy Day, 93 AACN member deans, faculty, and students sent over 300 messages to 157 Members of Congress. While AACN is proud to have such an involved network of stakeholders sending this message to their legislators, constituents must continue to educate legislators on the importance of a balanced approach to deficit reduction. The coming weeks will be critical as Congress attempts to reach a compromise before the January 2, 2013 deadline.

For more information on how you can contact your representatives, please see: http://capwiz.com/aacn/home/.

AACN’s Grassroots Network is a group of AACN member deans, faculty, students, and other interested stakeholders. Join the network to stay informed on the legislative issues impacting nursing education. For more information, or to join, see: http://capwiz.com/aacn/home/.

**Fall Meeting Speakers Discuss Nursing Advocacy, New Congress**

AACN’s Government Affairs Committee was honored to host an exciting lineup of speakers at the 2012 Fall Semiannual Meeting.

Krista Drobac, MPP, Director of the Health Division at the National Governors Association, gave AACN members an analysis of the anticipated path the healthcare system will take under the direction of each of the presidential candidates. She also discussed the Supreme Court’s decision to uphold nearly all of the Affordable Care Act and the how the healthcare system’s framework will be altered to expand future delivery of services.

The Honorable Alan Wheat, former Congressman and founder of Wheat Government Relations, led a panel on the future of health policy with his colleague Julie Shroyer, MSW, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Wheat Government Relations. They shared their perspectives and insightful interpretations on how the transition between the 112th Congress and the 113th Congress will shape AACN’s advocacy efforts during this period of healthcare system transformation and fiscal uncertainty.

Nancy DeBasio, PhD, RN, FAAN, President and Dean of the Research College of Nursing in Kansas City, Missouri, led a discussion on advocacy for small and private schools. A dedicated advocate for her school and the nursing profession, she shared her own experiences educating members of Congress and advocating on behalf of her students and institution. She also explained the many resources AACN’s Government Affairs Department offers to all member schools to assist them in their advocacy efforts.

In spite of Superstorm Sandy, AACN was pleased to have hosted these insightful guest speakers. AACN members engaged the speakers with thoughtful questions leading to productive discussion about nursing’s influence in the legislative process and how pending policy decisions will drive healthcare delivery changes.
Medicare Agency Rules in Favor of Patient Access to CRNA Care

According to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists:

“The Medicare agency issued its final ruling on Medicare coverage of chronic pain management services by CRNAs on Nov. 1, and it’s a victory for our patients and our profession.

The AANA applauds the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Administration for ruling to preserve patient access to chronic pain management services administered by CRNAs—in fact, access to all services within the full scope of CRNA practice. The official language from the ruling can be found by clicking here.

Going into effect on January 1, 2013, the highlights of the agency ruling include:

- Expanding Medicare coverage of services within CRNA scope of practice by stating that “Anesthesia and related care means those services that a certified registered nurse anesthetist is legally authorized to perform in that state in which the services are furnished”;
- Agreeing with the AANA and those who submitted comments through the Protect My Pain Care Campaign, whose overarching message was that the primary responsibility for establishing the scope of services CRNAs are trained for and authorized to furnish resides with the states; and
- Defining the Medicare benefit category for CRNAs as including any services CRNAs are permitted to furnish under their state scope of practice.

What does this mean? It means that under Medicare, Americans suffering from chronic pain will continue to receive the pain care they need from CRNAs they know and trust.

This ruling is an important development both for patients and for the nation’s 45,000 nurse anesthetists who deliver more than 33 million anesthetics every year and have gone through nationally accredited educational programs at the masters’ or doctoral level. It is consistent with the Institute of Medicine’s recommendation that Medicare cover services provided by advanced practice nurses to the full extent of their state scope of practice. It is especially meaningful for patients in rural and other medically underserved communities. Without local access to pain treatment from CRNAs, many seniors would have to travel long distances to receive care, move into a nursing home, or forego treatment altogether. This federal ruling also respects state scope of practice rules and regulations.

This hard fought victory would not be possible without the hard work put forth by thousands of AANA members and allies of our Protect My Pain Care campaign, including patients, CRNAs, nurses, physicians and other healthcare providers, hospital administrators, and legislators. You have all worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that access to quality care continues.

Important as this is, our work is not yet done. We will have to work to protect this rule from attack on Capitol Hill during the post-election “lame duck” session of Congress, and we will have to continue working in the states to protect our practice and patient access to our services, as we have always had to do.

The AANA and our Protect My Pain Care campaign will keep you updated on developments leading up to the January 1 implementation date, and we look forward to helping ensure that the CMS ruling is applied so that all Americans can continue to receive the top-quality, necessary pain management care they need and deserve.”
AACN Unveils University Government Relations Collaborative

AACN is delighted to announce the successful launch of our University Government Relations Collaborative (UGRC). The purpose of the UGRC is to provide university government relations (GR) staff with a direct link to AACN’s Government Affairs department concerning nursing education advocacy initiatives and other federal policy work. This collaborative strives to ensure that our members’ GR representatives are armed with the most current advocacy efforts to help promote a clear, consistent, and unified message to federal and state legislators on national nursing issues.

The UGRC currently consists of 55 representatives from 45 member institutions. These representatives are GR staff, faculty members, deans, communications staff, and development officers. The first UGRC conference call took place on October 15, 2012. Twenty-two representatives from 19 schools were able to participate. Discussion included an overview of the structure of AACN’s Government Affairs Department, current advocacy work, and plans for advocacy at AACN’s 2012 Semiannual Fall Meeting. If an AACN member school does not have access to a university or health systems government relations representative, the dean may appoint a representative for their school. Please note that contracted or outside lobbyists/representatives will not be included in the collaborative. Please email Director of Government Affairs Suzanne Miyamoto at smiyamoto@aacn.nche.edu if you wish to submit a representative for your school.

HRSA Webcast on Grant-Writing Now Available

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration’s October 25, 2012 webcast, which provided technical assistance in grant-writing and tips for strengthening grant applications, is now available online. During the webcast, participants were given the opportunity to:

- Learn what HRSA funding opportunities are available for schools of nursing.
- Understand the funding process.
- See examples of applications that have been selected to receive funding.
- Discover what factors can make it difficult to receive funding.
- Get tips for overcoming barriers.
- Learn how to write strong grant applications

To view the webcast, visit: http://services.choruscall.com/links/hrsa121025.html.

Government Affairs Resource Update: State Grassroots Liaisons

The AACN State Grassroots Liaison (SGL) program, initiated in 2004, is a network of member dean/director volunteers who help coordinate advocacy on the state level. One or more representatives are chosen from each state and the District of Columbia to serve at least one two-year term. SGLs are tasked with helping to build a stronger grassroots network for AACN membership and with serving as a resource on advocacy for members within their states. They coordinate member visits to the Senate during the Fall and Spring annual meetings, encourage visits to the House of Representatives, and mentor less experienced deans as they navigate these meetings.

When AACN finds it necessary to circulate an Action Alert asking members to contact their legislators about a certain issue, SGLs encourage other deans/directors in their state to participate. SGLs also serve as a
communication bridge between the state and federal levels by keeping AACN Government Affairs staff appraised of any policy issues on the state level pertaining to nursing or nursing education.

Do you know who your SGL is? To find out, see: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/2012_SGL_list.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/2012_SGL_list.pdf).

If you are interested in more information about becoming an SGL, please contact Lauren Inouye at linouye@aacn.nche.edu or 202-463-6930 ext. 271. Interested deans/directors representing schools in Connecticut, Delaware, or North Dakota are especially encouraged to volunteer.

**Now Accepting Applications for the Faculty Policy Intensive!**

AACN is excited to present the inaugural Faculty Policy Intensive (FPI) on March 18-21, 2013, in Washington, DC. This program will provide an in-depth immersion experience in the legislative process and the ever changing relationships that shape federal policy. Participants will gain a better understanding of the connections between federal departments and agencies, national nursing organizations, and the individual advocate and how all work together to create health policy. FPI provides an opportunity for attending faculty to sharpen and hone their advocacy, which can then be shared with their students. As our healthcare system continues to undergo transformations that will require interprofessional collaboration, it is crucial that the nursing profession develops leaders to represent nursing’s voice in policy decision-making.

**AACN will chose up to eight participants on a competitive-basis to attend this fully-funded opportunity.**


For more information, including application procedures and deadlines, please visit: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/fpi](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/fpi).

**2013 AACN Student Policy Summit-Register Your Students Today!**

The fourth annual Student Policy Summit will be held March 17-19, 2013 in Washington, DC. The Summit empowers student attendees with the political knowledge and savvy necessary to be successful advocates of their profession and to understand how policy influences their careers. As America’s healthcare system continues to undergo transformative changes, the voices of students are vital in shaping the future of care. AACN is dedicated to strengthening nursing’s voice in the policy arena to ensure that America’s patients receive the highest-quality care possible. Summit attendees are provided a rich experience that includes discussion sessions with leadership from federal departments and agencies, as well as the opportunity to meet with members of Congress and their staff to discuss issues relating to nursing education, research, and policy.
The Summit is open to baccalaureate and graduate students of AACN member schools who desire to gain a more in-depth understanding of the legislative process and nursing’s role in healthcare policy. AACN is fortunate to have generous sponsors for the 2013 Summit. Their support ensures that the cost of attending the Summit is affordable for all students, and that the Summit is a highly rewarding experience.

AACN is excited to announce that Susan B. Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN, will be the keynote speaker at the 2013 Student Policy Summit. Dr. Hassmiller, who joined the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 1997, presently serves as the Senior Adviser for Nursing. In this role, she shapes and leads the Foundation’s strategies to address nurse and nurse faculty shortages in an effort to create a higher quality of patient care in the United States. Drawn to the Foundation’s “organizational advocacy for the less fortunate and underserved,” Hassmiller is helping to ensure that RWJF’s commitments in nursing have a broad and lasting national impact.

In partnership with AARP, Hassmiller directs the Foundation’s Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, which seeks to increase access to high-quality, patient-centered care in a healthcare system where nurses contribute as essential partners in achieving success. This 50-state effort strives to implement the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine’s report the Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health.

Summit sponsorship opportunities are limited and are granted on a first-come, first-serve basis. To view sponsorship packages for the 2013 event, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/SPSSponsorPackages.pdf.

For more information on the Student Policy Summit, including registration and scholarship opportunities, visit: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/events/2013/03/17/student-policy-summit.