OMB Releases Report Detailing Sequestration

On September 14, 2012, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released *OMB Report Pursuant to the Sequestration Transparency Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–155)* outlining how sequestration mandated through the *Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 (Public Law 112-25)* will affect budgets for federal departments and agencies beginning January 2, 2013, pending no alternative legislation is passed to counteract these potentially devastating cuts.

OMB reports that sequestration would result in a 9.4% reduction in non-exempt defense discretionary funding, and an 8.2% reduction in non-exempt non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding. The sequestration also would impose a 2% cut to Medicare, a 7.6% cut to other non-exempt, non-defense mandatory programs, and a 10% cut to non-exempt defense mandatory programs.

Sequestration to NDD funding would reduce critical dollars for federal programs serving core functions in numerous employment sectors, including health care, education, medical research, law enforcement, housing, workforce development, and transportation. The report asserts that “On the nondefense side, sequestration would undermine investments vital to economic growth, threaten the safety and security of the American people, and cause severe harm to programs that benefit the middle-class, seniors, and children.” Sequestration of nursing education and training programs, including the Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII of the *Public Health Service Act*), would limit support for students, practicing nurses, and nurse faculty who depend on federal assistance to complete their education and advance their nursing careers. As the need for nursing care services continues to rise, reductions in funding to these vital programs have the potential to severely impact the nursing workforce pipeline.

Healthcare research would experience harsh cuts as well. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, federal funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) extramural research program provided funding for 50,000 research projects and training awards executed by over 300,000 researchers at more than 2,600 institutions. According to the report, $30.711 billion of NIH’s FY 2012 budget would be receive a cut of 8.2% ($2.518 billion), while an additional $150 million in mandatory budget authority would be subject to a 7.6 % cut ($11 million) totaling a $2.529 billion reduction in overall NIH funding.

To raise awareness about the negative consequences sequestration would have on NDD programs, the NDD United community, established in part by the Coalition for Health Funding, serves as a unified voice for local, state, and
national NDD-affiliated organizations to educate both Congress and the American people about the importance of a balanced approach toward deficit reduction. AACN is dedicated to participating in this national effort to ensure that NDD programs do not bear an unequal share of funding cuts compared to other federal programs, and that policy makers understand the importance of funding for the health professions community.

To read the report in full, see:

To learn more about the efforts of NDD United and how to be involved, see:
http://publichealthfunding.org/index.php/ndd_united1/.

**House Passes Continuing Resolution as Temporary Funding Measure**

As the start of the new fiscal year draws near, House and Senate leaders agreed to fund the government through a six-month continuing resolution (CR) for FY 2013. This package was negotiated before Congress left for the August recess and would extend from October 1, 2012 to March 27, 2013. On September 13, 2012, the House of Representatives passed the *Continuing Appropriations Resolution (H.J.Res. 117)* by a vote of 329-91. The Senate is schedule to vote on the CR on September 19, 2012. The CR would ensure that vital government operations continue through an extension of federal funding at a level that is 0.6% over the FY 2012 spending level. This level is consistent with the funding levels set by the *Budget Control Act* of 2011 and approximately $19 billion more than the FY 2013 budget put forth by House Appropriations Committee.

In his opening statement before the floor, House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) asserted, “This CR is a good-faith effort to provide limited but fair funding for government programs. It sticks with the agreement the House leadership made with the Senate and White House to continue government operations at the Budget Control Act-approved level of $1.047 trillion, thereby avoiding the perils of a threatened government shutdown.”

To read Chairman Roger’s opening statement, see:

**FTC Encourages Expansion of APRN Roles**

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has offered testimony urging the state of West Virginia to consider expansion of advanced practice nursing in response to the increasing demand for primary care providers within the state. The FTC’s similar efforts in other states during the past two years, including Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, and Texas, directly align with recommendations put forth in the Institute of Medicine’s 2010 report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, which summons the FTC to “review existing and proposed state regulations concerning advanced practice registered nurses to identify those that have anticompetitive effects without contributing to the health and safety of the public.”
Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), who serve in a wide variety of healthcare settings and treat patients across the entire lifespan, have the potential to provide West Virginia communities additional access to basic primary care services that is expected to become more strained as more West Virginians gain insurance coverage.


**HHS Announces More HealthCare Workforce Awards for 2012**

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the awards for over $100 million in grants to expand and strengthen the nation’s healthcare workforce. Of this total, $30.2 million is directly dedicated to nursing workforce development. The amount is allocated among the following programs:

- **Nurse Faculty Loan** ($23.3 million): provides grants to 112 nursing schools to increase the number of qualified nursing faculty in the United States. Support from this program allows nursing schools to offer eligible students partial loan forgiveness when they graduate and serve as full-time nursing faculty for a prescribed period of time. Awards from the prior academic year supported more than 1,550 master’s and doctoral students.

- **Nursing Workforce Diversity** ($4.6 million): supports grants to 14 nursing schools to increase nursing education opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including racial and ethnic minorities who are underrepresented among registered nurses. Grant activities will include academic support, financial assistance, and student mentoring. Awards from the prior academic year supported more than 10,600 students.

- **Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship** ($2.3 million): funds 81 nurse anesthetist education programs to provide traineeships to licensed registered nurses enrolled as full-time students in a master’s or doctoral nurse anesthesia program. Traineeships will pay all or part of the costs of the tuition, books, and fees, and the reasonable living expenses (stipends) of the individual during the period for which the traineeship is provided.

The total amount in grants also provided funding for:

- **Public Health** ($48.0 million): Funds for 37 Public Health Training Centers to train current and future public health workers in basic health skills and key public health issues; and grants to expand public health training programs and support medical residency-type fellowships at state and local health departments.

- **Interdisciplinary and Geriatric Education** ($6.6 million): Grants for projects to train and educate workers to provide geriatric care for the elderly; and support for the collaboration and integration of public health curricula in medical and clinical education.

- **Centers of Excellence** ($18.8 million): A five-year program to support the recruitment and performance of underrepresented minority students entering health careers, and to support research and the development of curricula, training and resources related to minority health issues.

Obama Administration Announces New Public Health Funding

As part of the administration’s growing focus on preventive care, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius has announced $48 million in funding investments for public health initiatives. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is awarding $23 million of the total $48 million to 37 Public Health Training Centers (PHTCs) located across the country. Created through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, PHTCs work to “improve the Nation’s public health system by strengthening the technical, scientific, managerial, and leadership competence of the current and future public health workforce. Emphasis is placed on developing the existing public health workforce as a foundation for improving the infrastructure of the public health system.”

The remaining portion of the funding, totaling $25 million, will be administered through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Portions of the funds will be allocated toward 227 new fellows placed in state and local public health departments. The funding stream will also be used to increase e-learning training opportunities for public health workers.

To learn more about the Public Health Training Centers program, visit: http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/grants/publichealth/phtc.html.

For more information about e-learning opportunities through the CDC, see: www.cdc.gov/learning.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Announces Funding Opportunity

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Research Career Development program is now accepting proposals for its Patient Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) Pathway to Independent Research Award. Fashioned through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, AHRQ is charged to create additional capacity for comparative effectiveness research through grant programs that train participants in the latest and most sophisticated research methodologies.

The purpose of this award is to aid junior non-tenure track faculty or those engaged in post-doctoral research to establish themselves as independent researchers. Ideal candidates will be early in their careers with proposals that are conducive to learning advanced comparative effectiveness research methodologies, but which also will contribute to the field of PCOR as a whole.

Letters of Intent are due November 19, 2012, and full applications should be submitted no later than December 17, 2012.

PCORI Funding for Comparative Clinical Effectiveness Research

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) has announced the beginning of the second cycle of the comparative clinical effectiveness research series. The funding announcements address four of PCORI’s five national Priorities for Research and Research Agenda points. All five are geared towards addressing knowledge gaps and producing information that will help patients, and those who help care for them, make informed decisions when opting for medical treatments and tailoring an individualized plan of care. These five points were created to:

1. Assess prevention, diagnosis, and treatment options so that crucial information on comparative effectiveness is available for patients during the decision-making process;
2. Improve healthcare systems by attracting proposals to compare strategies currently used by healthcare systems to improve care quality and outcomes;
3. Evaluate methods of communication and dissemination of research to healthcare stakeholders;
4. Overcome health and healthcare disparities, as well as barriers to healthcare faced by specific groups of patients;
5. Accelerating patient-centered outcomes research and methodological research. This target point will be addressed in funding opportunities to be announced later this year.

For more information about this opportunity, or to apply, see: [http://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/funding-announcements/](http://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/funding-announcements/).  

Attend the First Annual AACN Faculty Policy Intensive!

AACN is proud to introduce its Inaugural Faculty Policy Intensive (FPI) which will be held March 18-21, 2013, in Washington, DC. AACN will select up to eight faculty from AACN member schools who desire a more in-depth experience that will further their understanding of the legislative process and the dynamic relationships between federal departments and agencies, national nursing organizations, and the individual advocate. This comprehensive program will provide faculty with dynamic sessions that will enhance communications skills necessary for effective advocacy on issues relating to nursing education, research, and practice, and will give participants the opportunity to meet with nursing leadership on Capitol Hill. A programmatic outline of FPI can be accessed by viewing the tentative agenda for the 2013 FPI here: [http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/FPIAgenda.pdf](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/FPIAgenda.pdf).

FPI is an opportunity that will offer attending faculty experiences to strengthen their policy and advocacy background that can then be further 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 participants on a competitive-basis to attend this fully-funded opportunity.**
For more information, please visit: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/fpi. Details on application procedures and deadlines will be posted later this month.

2013 AACN Student Policy Summit Open for Registration and Sponsorship!

The fourth annual Student Policy Summit will be held March 17-19, 2013 in Washington, DC. The Summit is open to baccalaureate and graduate students of AACN member schools who desire to gain a more in-depth understanding about the legislative process and nursing’s role in healthcare policy. Summit sponsorship ensures that the cost of attending the Summit is affordable for all students, and that the Summit is a highly rewarding experience.

Jenny Carson, BSN, RN, who attended last year’s Summit on behalf of the University of Portland stated, "The Student Policy Summit opened my eyes to the importance of policy within the nursing profession. Attending the Summit allowed me to draw clearer connections between the traditional nurse’s role at the bedside and the importance of nursing’s voice to influence health policy. I have learned advocacy is a nursing role that occurs in so many ways beyond direct patient care, and there is a great need for nurses to be involved while critical decisions affecting the future health of Americans are being made. I would encourage any student that is curious about the policy process or wants to learn more about federal programs that influence nursing to join us in the Nation’s Capital!"

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 2012 Summit 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. Based on level of sponsorship, institutions that choose to sponsor have the opportunity to have their name and logo featured on Summit materials. Higher levels of sponsorship cover the cost of registration for a limited number of students awarded on a merit-basis. 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.

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