AACN Applauds Marilyn Tavenner as CMS Administrator

On May 15, 2013, by a vote of 91-7, the Senate confirmed Marilyn Tavenner, MHA, RN, as the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Ms. Tavenner has served within the agency since late 2011, having been appointed by President Obama as Acting Administrator when Don Berwick stepped down from the position. Ms. Tavenner is the first nurse to be appointed to this role and the first CMS administrator to be officially confirmed by the Senate since 2006. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius stated, “Marilyn brings with her a breadth of experience and expertise from virtually all angles of health care policy and delivery, having served as a hospital CEO, a state health official, and a registered nurse. Marilyn will serve in a critical role at CMS as we work to improve the health care for hundreds of millions of Americans.”

As Administrator of CMS, Ms. Tavenner will be responsible for continued implementation of the Affordable Care Act, including Medicaid expansion, the creation of the insurance exchanges, and state guidance on Children’s Health Insurance Program. Prior to her work at CMS, she oversaw 12 health agencies as the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Secretary of Health and Human Resources under former Governor Tim Kaine. Prior to this, Administrator Tavenner worked for the Hospital Corporation of America for 25 years, serving first as a registered nurse and eventually becoming Group President of Outpatient Services.

AACN recognizes the enormous contributions Administrator Tavenner has made during her time at CMS and is certain her rich expertise and poised leadership will successfully carry the agency forward in its goals. AACN recently sent a letter congratulating the Administrator on her confirmation.

View AACN’s past letter of support for the nomination of Marilyn Tavenner as CMS Administrator.

For more information about Administrator Tavenner, see: http://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/leadership/.

AACN Invited to Attend White House Meeting on ACA Implementation

On June 18, 2013, AACN Government Affairs staff attended a briefing organized by White House officials regarding the implementation of the Affordable Care Act’s insurance exchanges (“marketplaces”) over the next year. White House officials discussed the Administration’s strategy for enrolling individuals into these insurance programs starting October 1, 2013. More specifically, they are targeting a high volume of healthy, young adults between the ages 18 and 35 early in the enrollment period to help ensure that premium rates remain stable. Between October 1, 2013 and March 31, 2014, the White House hopes to see a significant portion of the 7 million patients who fit this profile enrolled in the exchanges. A variety of public outreach measures, including a multilingual call center, partnerships with libraries and hospitals, as well as a re-launch of the website (https://www.healthcare.gov) will provide opportunities for individuals to learn about coverage options and to enroll. Those participating in the

Sequestration Update: Federal Agencies Release Final FY 2013 Funding Levels

In last month’s Policy Beat, AACN reported that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) had released a preliminary report on how it would allocate sequestration funding cuts to its programs. Sequestration, or across-the-board-cuts to discretionary spending as mandated through the Budget Control Act of 2011, has pressured federal agencies to make difficult decisions regarding funding prioritization. On May 29, 2013, HRSA released its final version of its sequestration operating plan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 as ordered by the Office of Management and Budget. Under sequestration, HRSA would receive approximately $405 million less for FY 2013 compared to FY 2012. The Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act) would receive a cut of approximately 5.88%, which equates to a funding level of $217.501 million for FY 2013 (compared to $231.099 million for FY 2012). AACN’s Sequestration: Estimating the Impact on America’s Nursing Workforce and Healthcare Discoveries policy brief (AACN Sequestration Factsheet) details how these cuts would impact individual Title VIII programs and the National Institutes of Health.

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) also released its final sequestration operating plan. AHRQ would operate on $429 million in FY 2013. While this level is higher than what the agency received for FY 2012 ($405 million), the FY 2013 level includes more funding transfers from the Affordable Care Act and the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund and is approximately $4.3 million less than the level proposed in the President’s FY 2014 budget. AACN appreciates that Congress and federal agencies are faced with a difficult budget climate, and continues to advocate for nursing and research programs in FY 2014.

A funding chart detailing funding for nursing education and healthcare programs in FY 2013 compared to the President’s FY 2014 budget can be found here: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/FY14-Appropriations.pdf.

A chart detailing historical funding levels for nursing education and healthcare programs (FY 2001-FY2013) can be found here: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/Historic-FY-Funding.pdf.

New Video Shows Impact of Funding Cuts

The Coalition for Health Funding’s Non-Defense Discretionary (NDD) United, a coalition centered around protecting funding for critical programs during this uncertain budget climate and of which AACN is a member, has created a video to educate stakeholders about the nature and impact of cuts to government funding. The video begins with a basic overview of the budget and how money is allocated, before delving into the specifics of the cuts and their projected effects. According to the video, NDD programs comprise a mere 15% of total government spending, yet these programs have been subjected to disproportionate cuts compared to mandatory spending. As AACN and NDD United recognize the need for fiscal responsibility, and as legislators work to reduce the federal deficit, we will continue to request that Congress protects essential investments in our country’s future.

To watch the video, or learn more about NDD United, see: http://www.nddunited.org/.

For more information on AACN’s appropriations advocacy efforts, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/appropriations.
NIH Director Requests Input on Sequestration Impact

The Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Francis Collins, MD, PhD, is reaching out to the scientific research community via Twitter. He posted a message on May 7, 2013 asking researchers to respond with examples of the way the sequestration cuts are impacting their work, using hashtag #NIHSequesterImpact. Dr. Collins shared some of the responses at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies hearing on the FY 2014 Budget Request for NIH on May 15, 2013.

To read the submissions, see: https://twitter.com/search?q=%23NIHSequesterImpact&src=hash.

To join the conversation, tweet using the hashtag #NIHSequesterImpact. To access Dr. Collins’ written testimony submitted to the May 15 hearing, see: http://www.nih.gov/about/director/budgetrequest/fy2014testimony.htm.

CMMI Announces Funding Opportunity

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) has made $1 billion available for the second round of the Health Care Innovation Awards (HCIA). These awards will test new payment and service delivery models that improve quality of care for people enrolled in Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) while simultaneously reducing costs. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has defined four areas of service delivery in which they are seeking proposals for round two of HCIA funding: models that reduce Medicare, Medicaid, or CHIP costs in outpatient or post-acute settings; models that improve care for populations with specialized needs; models which test new methods for specific types of providers to transform their financial and clinical models; and models that improve the health of populations using approaches that extend beyond the clinical setting. In addition to addressing one of these areas, proposals should include the design for a new payment model that will support the care delivery paradigm they suggest.

Any interested party is welcome to apply for this opportunity. Letters of intent to apply must be submitted by June 28, 2013. Applications will be accepted until August 15, 2013. For more information on this opportunity, see http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/Health-Care-Innovation-Awards/Round-2.html.

For more information on CMMI and its work, see: http://innovation.cms.gov/index.html.

PCORI Calls for Reviewers

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) is seeking Patient and Stakeholder Reviewers for funding applications. These reviewers should be from groups not typically represented in scientific review boards, which can bring a unique perspective to the process. New reviewers will work with more conventional scientific reviewers to evaluate proposed projects for their relevance to patient and stakeholder priorities and interests. All reviewers will receive training in the evaluation criteria and process. Applications for the next round of funding proposals are due July 1, 2013.

For more information about becoming a reviewer, see: http://www.pcori.org/get-involved/reviewers/prospective-reviewers/.

To apply, visit: http://www.pcori.org/get-involved/reviewers/become-stakeholder-reviewer/.

Patient and Stakeholder Reviewers are a key component in PCORI’s efforts to conduct research that helps patients and their healthcare providers make better informed choices regarding their health care options. For more information about PCORI and the research it funds, see: http://www.pcori.org/.
New Members to Join National Advisory Council for Nursing Research

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) recently announced the appointment of five new members to the National Advisory Council for Nursing Research (NACNR). The council consists of several government officials, 10 representatives of the health and scientific research communities, and five members of the general public, including experts in public policy, law, and economics. NACNR provides overall direction to NINR’s research goals and its programs. The new members from the nursing profession are:

Cynthia Barnes-Boyd, PhD, MSN, FAAN, is a senior director for the Office of the Vice President for Health Affairs of the University of Illinois Health Sciences System (UI-Health). She is also a clinical associate professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health and College of Nursing. Dr. Barnes-Boyd is experienced in guiding program evaluation research in large-scale projects that include community partners. She is the director of UI-Health’s Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships, which develops partnerships to support collaborative research, educational, and service initiatives to address health disparities.

Donna Hathaway, PhD, RN, FAAN, is a professor at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) College of Nursing. Her 20-year, NINR-funded program of research investigates bio-behavioral linkages to quality of life outcomes following organ transplantation and has yielded nearly 200 publications. She has served on the board of directors of the International Transplant Nurses Society and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, where she also served as chair of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Essentials Task Force. Dr. Hathaway is also a past president of the Southern Nursing Research Society, a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, and an alumna of the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows.

Jillian Inouye, PhD, RN, is the associate dean for research and the Tony and Renee Marlon Angel Professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Nursing and School of Allied Health. Her research program focuses on health disparities, chronic illness, and cognitive behavioral interventions for lifestyle changes. Dr. Inouye, a former East-West Center and Fogarty grantee, was a founding member of the Asian American Pacific Islander Nurses Association and currently serves as vice president of the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurses. She is a member of the National Advisory Committee of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Minority Fellowship Program.

Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, PhD, RN, FAAN, is the associate vice president for health promotion, university chief wellness officer, and professor and dean of the College of Nursing at The Ohio State University. She also is a professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at Ohio State’s College of Medicine. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and the National Academies of Practice and served on the 16-member United States Preventive Services Task Force. Her most recent honors include induction into Sigma Theta Tau International’s Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame and receipt of the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties’ Lifetime Achievement Award.

Marjana Tomic-Canic, PhD, RN, is a professor of dermatology and director of the Wound Healing and Regenerative Medicine Research Program at the University of Miami (UM) Miller School of Medicine. She is a senior faculty member of the Human Genetics and Genomics Program, Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology Program, and is an associate member of the Hussman Institute for Human Genomics at UM. Her current research focus is the molecular and cellular mechanisms of wound healing. Dr. Tomic-Canic is a past board member of the Wound Healing Society, and a member of the Society of Investigative Dermatology, Association of Advanced Wound Care, American Diabetes Association, and the New York Academy of Science.

For more information about NACNR, see: http://www.ninr.nih.gov/aboutninr/nacnr.

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