Advocacy Update from AACN’s 2013 Fall Semiannual Meeting

AACN’s Fall Advocacy Day
AACN would like to thank our members who contributed to the success of our advocacy efforts during the Fall Semiannual Meeting in Washington, DC. On Monday, October 28, AACN members made a total of 79 Hill visits (43 with Senate offices; 36 with House offices) to request that healthcare and research programs be protected from sequestration and to garner co-sponsorship for the Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act of 2013 (H.R. 2504 or S. 1143), which allows advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to certify home health services. If you have not already done so, please remember to record your House office visits (http://capwiz.com/aacn/lrm/feedback.tt) or your Senate office visits if your State Grassroots Liaison has not already done so.

AACN’s Virtual Advocacy Day
AACN’s Virtual Advocacy Day, which was hosted in conjunction with the Fall Meeting Advocacy Day, yielded a total of 662 messages reaching 128 Representatives and 80 Senators. This is the second-highest record number of Action Alert messages sent since AACN initiated the Virtual Advocacy Day in 2009! The alert echoed the issues AACN members took to the Hill.

Congressional Reception
AACN is pleased to report that the Congressional Reception, which took place on Capitol Hill during Monday evening, October 28, had an overwhelming turnout of AACN members, Members of Congress, and Congressional staff. The following Representatives attended the reception and met with deans from their state, and several offered remarks to the membership:

Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA-24)
Rep. Howard Coble (R-NC-06)
Rep. John Dingell (D-MI-12)
Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL-08)
Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM-01)
Rep. Richard Hanna (R-NY-22)
Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV-04)
Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX-30)
Rep. Water B. Jones (R-NC-03)
Rep. David Joyce (R-OH-14)
Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA-02)
Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-PA-07)
Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI-06)
Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV-03)


House Nursing Caucus Co-Chair Rep. David Joyce with members of AACN’s Ohio delegation.
In addition, AACN honored Representatives Richard Hanna (R-NY-22) and Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) with the 2013 Congressional Appreciation Award. AACN members from New York presented Rep. Hanna with his award during the reception in the Gold Room of the Rayburn House Office Building. Rep. Hanna was instrumental in circulating the bi-partisan Dear Colleague letter with Rep. Lois Capps in support of the Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act) for FY 2014. AACN members from California were escorted to the Capitol to present Rep. Lee with her award. Rep. Lee has been a long-standing supporter of nursing and of legislation that advances our profession. Our association thanks these two nursing champions.

To view more pictures from AACN’s Congressional Reception, visit: https://aacnfall13congressionalreception.shutterfly.com/?role=-2.
As the deadline for reaching a budget solution draws near, the Budget Conference Committee continues their negotiations for a deal that will fund the federal government for the remainder of FY 2014 and address the issue of sequestration. Led by Senate Budget Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan (R-WI-01), the bipartisan, bicameral Budget Conference Committee is comprised of 21 additional Senators and six additional Representatives. The Committee has until December 13, 2013 to present an agreement that will provide critical funding for discretionary programs and ideally propose alternative policies to counteract sequestration cuts. These discussions are occurring against the backdrop of a continuing resolution (Continuing Appropriations Act of 2014 [P.L. 113-46]) that was signed into law on October 17, 2013, ending the 16-day government shutdown, and funds current federal activities at FY 2013 levels (post-sequestration) until January 15, 2014.

AACN continues to collaborate with the healthcare and higher education communities, urging Congress to maintain healthcare, research, and education programs as high priorities in FY 2014 discussions, and to protect them from sequestration. Recently, AACN sent a letter to the Budget Conference Committee members expressing how healthcare and education programs develop future generations of healthcare providers, including nurses, and why it is imperative that they are spared from additional cuts. The Nursing Community, of which AACN is a member, also submitted a letter to the Committee expressing the need for continued support for healthcare and research programs, including the Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Our association also signed on in support of a letter to the Committee sent on behalf of the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition, as well as the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research’s letter in support of the NIH.

In addition, AACN belongs to the Coalition for Health Funding (CHF) and the Non-Defense Discretionary (NDD) United coalition, which advocate for a balanced-budget solution and for the removal of sequestration. For more information about CHF’s work to protect NDD programs during these difficult fiscal challenges, visit: http://publichealthfunding.org/index.php/ndd_united1/

AACN recently attended a Budget Conference Committee hearing to witness Director of the Congressional Budget Office Dr. Doug Elmendorf testify before the Committee members. In his opening statement, Director Elmendorf asserted, “The further tightening of fiscal policy built into current law for the next few years, as well as the ongoing uncertainty about fiscal policy, represent continued headwinds to the economic recovery.”

Concerning the Committee’s immense responsibilities, Chairman Ryan stated, “We hope that today’s meeting will keep the ball rolling… The reason we are here to is to get an agreement.” Chairman Murray commented, “Our highest priority has to be making sure we meet our short and medium term needs…I am hopeful that we will get to a bipartisan compromise very soon.”

To learn more about AACN’s FY 2014 advocacy efforts, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/appropriations.

To view a video of the Committee hearing, visit: http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/BudgetConferen.
Research Universities Feeling Sequestration’s Effects

A recent survey of public and private research universities sponsored by the Association of American Universities, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and The Science Coalition reveals that institutions are experiencing the devastating effects of sequestration, which began in March. Seventy percent of respondents have seen delays in their research projects, as well as fewer new grants to support studies. Universities were left scrambling to come up with alternative sources of funding to meet existing commitments to faculty, staff, and students given the delay or absence of federal funds. In addition, 58% of respondents report having to reduce research-related personnel in a move that will negatively affect research capacity for years to come. As stable funding for student research is reduced, universities describe how their students are leaving their programs in pursuit of non-academic careers. For more information on the survey of research universities, see: http://www.sciencecoalition.org/downloads/1384366361aauaplutscequestersurveyhandout11-11-13final.pdf.

For more information on sequestration, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/AACN-Sequestration-Factsheet.pdf.

IOM Elects New Members

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) announced 70 new members and 10 new foreign associates during its annual meeting this October. IOM members are leaders within their profession who have made significant contributions to the advancement of medical science, healthcare, and public health. They are elected by current active members and commit to participate in IOM committees, boards, and other activities to contribute to the IOM’s research goals. The new members represent a diversity of fields, including medical practice and research, nursing, economics, biostatistics, sociology, health policy, veterinary medicine, and psychology. Five of the individuals elected into this new cohort are nurses, including AACN member Bernadette Melnyk from the Ohio State University.

Susan B. Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN

Senior Adviser for Nursing, and Director, Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, NJ

Ann Kurth, PhD, CNM, FAAN

Professor and Executive Director, College of Nursing Global Division, and Associate Dean for Research, Global Institute of Public Health, New York University, New York City, NY

Beverly Louise Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN

CEO, National League for Nursing, Washington, DC

Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAANP, FAAN

Associate Vice President for Health Promotion; University Chief Wellness Officer; Dean and Professor, College of Nursing; and professor of pediatrics and psychiatry, College of Medicine, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Elizabeth (Betsy) Elder Weiner, PhD, RN-BC, FACMI, FAAN

Senior Associate Dean for Informatics, Centennial Independence Foundation Professor of Nursing, and Professor of biomedical informatics, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, TN

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November Issue of *Health Affairs* Highlights Nursing’s Role in Transforming the Healthcare Workforce

AACN is proud to cosponsor the November issue of *Health Affairs*, which evaluates the state of our nation’s healthcare workforce and ways to improve it for greater efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. This month’s issue examined the contributions of APRNs, and in particular nurse practitioners (NPs), in their role to fill the need for more primary care providers. The importance of Nurse-Managed Health Centers and the essential holistic perspective registered nurses and NPs bring to patient care teams, especially with regards to chronic condition management, are also discussed. In addition, the journal addresses current scope of practice issues and how removing barriers preventing APRNs from practicing to the full extent of their education and training could result in cost savings, as well as increase access to care, especially for vulnerable patient populations.

To read the November issue of *Health Affairs: Redesigning the Health Care Workforce*, visit: http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/32/11.toc.

WHO Research Finds Quality of Care Provided by APRNs Equivalent to that of Physicians

A World Health Organization (WHO) review of studies on the effectiveness of non-physician providers, which includes registered nurses (RNs) and APRNs, concluded that the care they provide is just as effective as physicians—if not better. WHO’s Giorgio Cometto says, “The evidence shows there aren’t statistically significant differences…The quality of care they provide is comparable to physicians. In some cases, for specific services, they actually outperform physicians.” In addition, patients often report higher satisfaction with their non-physician providers. This is especially true of patients seeking maternal and child care, as well as those with chronic conditions.

Empirical evidence backs growing support among patients and healthcare workforce experts that employing APRNs and other non-physician providers will continue to serve an increasingly important role in the search for delivering high-quality, cost-effective care in all regions of the country. With the global shortage of primary care providers, the WHO believes non-physician providers, who are often less costly to educate and more willing to work in rural or underserved areas, are a key part of the solution. The IOM agrees, asserting in their landmark report *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* that RNs and APRNs should be able to practice to full extent of their education, thereby helping to alleviate excess demand.

For a summary of the WHO review, see: http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/91/11/13-118786.pdf.

For news coverage of the WHO review, see: http://www.nbcnews.com/health/midwives-nurse-are-good-docs-sometimes-better-who-finds-8C11506820.

Funding Opportunities for Nursing Students and Faculty

**NINR Graduate Partnership Program**

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) is accepting applications for its Graduate Partnerships Program (GPP) through December 9, 2013. The GPP is a doctoral fellowship training program, which allows students to conduct their dissertation research within the Intramural Research Programs of the NIH in Bethesda, Maryland. Upon completion of their coursework at their school of nursing, students will work with mentors at NINR to hone their research skills, network with leading nursing scientists, and take advantage of unique career and educational opportunities. Eligable students must plan to complete all doctoral coursework by August 2014.
For more information, see: http://www.ninr.nih.gov/training/trainingopportunitiesintramural/graduate-partnership-program. Applications are due December 9, 2013.

**RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars Program**

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Nurse Faculty Scholars program is now accepting applications for the 2013-2014 cohort. This program provides mentorship, leadership training, and salary and research support to junior nursing faculty. Up to 12 candidates will be selected to participate in this opportunity. Eligible candidates will be registered nurses with research doctorates and no more than five years of experience in the faculty role. Potential scholars must also be nominated by their academic institution. This cycle of funding will support 12 awards of up to $350,000 each over three years.

For more information, see: http://www.rwjf.org/cfp/nfs7?cid=XEM_A7660. The deadline to apply is February 12, 2014.

**AACN’s Faculty Policy Intensive Now Accepting Applications**

AACN will hold its second annual Faculty Policy Intensive (FPI) on March 24-27, 2014 in Washington, DC. This fully-funded, four-day immersion program is designed for faculty of AACN member schools who are interested in actively pursuing a role in healthcare and nursing policy. The Faculty Policy Intensive offers participants the opportunity to enhance existing knowledge of policy and advocacy through sessions that will strengthen understanding of the legislative process and the dynamic relationships between federal departments and agencies, national nursing organizations, and the individual advocate. At the conclusion of the FPI, participants will put their new advocacy skills to use as AACN Faculty Policy Fellows. For more information about FPI, including a draft agenda and registration details, visit: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/fpi.

**Testimony from members of the Inaugural Class of FPI Fellows:**

“The entire week was packed within formative presentations, as we were able to dialogue with directors at such agencies as the National Institute for Nursing Research and members of an interprofessional roundtable of healthcare association leaders. I would recommend this program to any nurse educator who wants to gain a more national perspective, and hear it directly from those who are making health policy decisions.”

—Mary Garnica, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, FPI Class of 2013

“The AACN Faculty Policy Intensive was indeed an intense learning experience on the importance of policy for the future in nursing. AACN connected us with key experts related to healthcare policy. My key take-home messages are that nurses need to speak with one voice, and that nurses need to be at the table – at hospital and healthcare advisory boards, via key state and federal.”

—Joanne Noone, PhD, RN, CNE, FPI Class of 2013