AACN Spring Advocacy Day a Success!

On March 24, 2014, AACN member deans and over 130 undergraduate and graduate students met with Congressional offices to discuss priorities for nursing education, research, and practice in FY 2015. These advocates made a total of 72 Hill visits (38 with Senate offices; 34 with House offices). In addition, nearly 250 AACN advocates contacted their legislators virtually to bolster nursing’s presence on the Hill.

Specifically for FY 2015, AACN requested $251 million for the Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act). This level is also supported by the Nursing Community, a coalition of 60 national nursing organizations, of which AACN is a member. AACN also requested $150 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR, National Institutes of Health). This level of funding is proportional to the total funding amount supported by the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research for the overall NIH budget for FY 2015.

AACN members asked their Representatives sign a Dear Colleague letter circulated by Representatives Lois Capps, RN, (D-CA) and Richard Hanna (R-NY) requesting “strong support” for the Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act) and asked their Senators to sign a Dear Colleague letter circulated by Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) requesting $251 million for Title VIII. The House Dear Colleague letter garnered 94 signatures, which is 10 more Representatives who signed than last year. The Senate Dear Colleague letter garnered 29 signatures, which is one more than last year.

In addition, AACN members requested Members of Congress to cosponsor legislation that supports advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and their contributions to the healthcare system. For a list of these bills, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/APRN-Request-Policy-Brief.pdf.

AACN’s 535 Project: Congressional Connections
In just one day, AACN’s members and Grassroots Network contacted 163 Representatives and 38 Senators, representing 45 states. These advocates connected with nearly 40% of America’s federal lawmakers on nursing’s priorities for FY 2015. This represents a significant contribution to AACN’s 535 Project, which aims to connect with all 535 Members of Congress and their staff.
According to AACN data, since the launch of 535 Project in early March, the top six responsive states (including participation in Action Alerts and in-person Congressional office visits) are Illinois, Florida, Michigan, Virginia, California, and Ohio.


For more information on AACN’s appropriations advocacy, visit:

AACN CEO Polly Bednash Honored at Congressional Reception

On the evening of March 24, AACN hosted a Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill in conjunction with House Nursing Caucus Co-Chairs Representative Lois Capps, RN, (D-CA) and Representative David Joyce (R-OH). The reception was a wonderful opportunity for AACN deans, Faculty Policy Intensive fellows, and Student Policy Summit attendees to network with Congressional staff. AACN was pleased to welcome Members of Congress who showed their support for nursing, including Representatives Larry Bucshon (R-IN), Lois Capps (D-CA), Steve Cohen (D-TN), Rodney Davis (R-IL), Walter Jones (R-NC), David Joyce (R-OH), James Renacci (R-OH), and Phil Roe (R-TN) who attended the reception and met with nursing constituents from their state.

AACN’s Chief Executive Officer Geraldine “Polly” Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN, was honored at the reception in light of her upcoming retirement. Dr. Bednash has been with AACN for 28 years; serving first as the Director of

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AACN's CEO Polly Bednash (left) with Reps. Lois Capps, RN (D-CA) and David Joyce (R-OH).

Rep. Capps with AACN Members and Students from CA

Eleanor Howell, Government Affairs Committee Chair, with Rep. Joyce

Rep. Davis with AACN Members and Students from IL

Rep. Bucshon with AACN Members from IN

Rep. Cohen with AACN Members and Students from TN

AACN President Eileen Breslin (left) and CEO Polly Bednash
Teri Murray Recognized as AACN’s Advocate of the Year

Each year, AACN recognizes one of its members as the association’s Advocate of the Year. This year, Dr. Teri Murray, Dean at the St. Louis University School of Nursing, was presented with the award during the Spring Annual Meeting by AACN’s former Government Affairs Committee Chair (GAC) Dr. Eleanor Howell. Dr. Murray previously served as the GAC Chair from 2011-2013, and has been an inspiring leader in AACN’s advocacy efforts. In 2013, was consistently a top responder to AACN’s Action Alert messages, which request Members of Congress to support policies consistent with AACN’s Federal Policy Agenda. Dr. Murray also serves as an AACN State Grassroots Liaison for Missouri. In this role, she strengthens the collective voice of her state by collaborating with her colleagues to ensure that the voice of nursing education, research, and practice is amplified in the policy and political realms. AACN would like to thank Dr. Murray and recognize her as a true nursing advocate.

AACN’s Fifth Annual Student Policy Summit a Success

AACN hosted its fifth annual Student Policy Summit March 23-25, 2014 in Washington, DC. The Summit welcomed 135 students, representing 49 schools in 29 states across the nation. This three-day conference convened undergraduate and graduate students from AACN member institutions in our nation’s capital to learn about the policy process and to engage in advocacy on behalf of the profession. The students heard from an array of nursing and healthcare policy experts, including Dr. Patricia Grady, Director of the National Institute of Nursing Research, Dr. Richard Ricciardi, Health Scientist at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and Dr. Uwe E. Reinhardt, James Madison Professor of Political Economy and Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Harvard University.

On the second day of the Summit, the students accompanied the deans from their state attending the Spring Annual Meeting on Congressional office visits to advocate for the association’s education, research, and practice priorities in FY 2015. The students reported these meetings as a highlight of their experience in Washington and leave feeling empowered to continue building the relationships they form with Congressional staff. Summit attendees had the opportunity to network at the Congressional Reception hosted on Capitol Hill later that evening. On the last day of program, they attended sessions on how to propel their nursing careers forward using the content and skills they cultivated at the Summit. The students were inducted into the Student Policy Summit Academy by AACN’s new
The 2014 FPI Fellows pose with The Honorable Alan Wheat (back row, second from the right) during the program’s closing ceremony. AACN would like to thank its generous sponsors for making the 2014 Student Policy Summit a great success:

**Platinum Level:**
University of Oklahoma Health Science Center School of Nursing  
Jonas Center for Nursing and Veterans Healthcare

**Gold Level:**  
Michigan State University College of Nursing  
Thomas Jefferson University, Jefferson School of Nursing  
University of New Mexico College of Nursing

**Silver Level:**  
University of Southern Indiana College of Nursing & Health Professions  
Indiana University School of Nursing

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**AACN Inducts Eight Faculty Members as FPI Fellows**

AACN congratulates the 2014 class of Faculty Policy Intensive (FPI) Fellows upon completion of a four-day policy program in Washington, DC. The FPI sponsored eight faculty members from a competitive pool of applicants to convene in our nation’s capital and meet with nursing and healthcare policy leaders from Congress, the Administration, and the private sector. These FPI Fellows will continue to collaborate with AACN to help inform the association’s advocacy efforts and serve as leaders for their colleagues.

AACN extends a warm congratulations to: Robin Arends, South Dakota State University; Dr. Tammy Barbé, Georgia Baptist College of Nursing of Mercer University; Dr. Joseph Burkard, University of San Diego; Dr. Kim Cox, University of New Mexico; Dr. Sharron Crowder, Indiana University; Nicole Garritano, The University of Cincinnati; Dr. Janice Lazear, University of Maryland; and Dr. Jennifer Lemoine, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

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**Ask Your Legislator to Support National Nurses Week**

**AACN’s Grassroots**

Take action now and request your representative to cosponsor H. Res. 540 in support of National Nurses Week! The resolution was introduced by Representatives Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), David Joyce (R-OH), Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH), and Mike Coffman (R-CO) and honors nurses and the contributions they make to the health of the nation. National Nurses Week is celebrated annually from May 6, also known as National Recognition Day for Nurses, through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale. This week is a time to reflect on the impact nurses have on the lives and health of their patients.

To ask your legislator to support the resolution, see: [http://www.capwiz.com/aacn/issues/alert/?alertid=63188096&type=CO](http://www.capwiz.com/aacn/issues/alert/?alertid=63188096&type=CO).
2014 NURSE Corps Scholarship Programs Application 
Cycle Now Open

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recently announced that the application cycle for the 2014 NURSE Corps Scholarship Program is now open. The scholarship is available to students enrolled in diploma, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate nursing programs to receive funding for tuition, fees, and other educational costs in exchange for them working in a Critical Shortage Facility upon graduation.

The deadline for completed applications is May 22, 2014, at 7:30pm EST. Interested applicants are also encouraged to view the On-Demand Webinar which covers eligibility requirements, application resources, and the application process. Experts will be available via conference call to answer applicants’ questions on Saturday May 17, 2014 from 1:00-3:00pm ET. For more information please visit:

HHS Releases Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2018

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released its Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2018. HHS issues this reports every four years to refocus its work to address the nation’s evolving health and human services issues. Updated on March 10, 2014, the Strategic Plan states the following top priorities as goals for the next four years:

1. Strengthen health care
2. Advance scientific knowledge and innovation
3. Advance the health, safety, and well-being of American people
4. Ensure efficiency, transparency, accountability, and effectiveness of HHS programs

In addition to these priorities, the Secretary also released specific strategic initiatives of focus for the next four years, some of which include: eliminating health disparities; promoting early childhood health and development; promote prevention and wellness across the lifespan; helping Americans achieve and maintain a healthy weight; and promoting program integrity, accountability, and transparency. HHS is committed to enhancing the well-being of the American people, and continues to do so through the release of these reports and continued efforts of their supporting programs and partnerships. For a more detailed review of the Strategic Plan, visit:

Upcoming NINR Director’s Lecture Featuring Dr. Barbara Drew

The National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) is pleased to announce that the next Director’s Lecture will feature Dr. Barbara Drew, PhD, RN, FAAN, FAHA. Her presentation, “Electrocardiographic Monitoring: Two Decades of Discovery” will detail some of Dr. Drew’s research aimed at improving cardiac monitoring for more accurate diagnosis of myocardial ischemia and drug-induced long QT syndrome.

Dr. Drew is the David Mortara Distinguished Professor of Physiological Nursing and Clinical Professor of Medicine in Cardiology at the University of California, San Francisco. As a professor for the past 32 years, she has enlightened medical students, residents, and graduate nursing students on the topic of electrocardiography. Dr. Drew founded the University’s ECG Monitoring Research Lab in the School of Nursing.

The lecture, scheduled for May 20, 2014 from 10:30-11:30am, will take place at the NIH Campus, and will be made available via videocast and podcast for viewers to watch remotely here:
Special Enrollment Period for the Insurance Marketplace

March 31, 2014 marked the official closing of the Open Enrollment period for the Health Insurance Marketplace to ensure coverage for 2014. However, a Special Enrollment period is available for individuals who “have a qualifying life event or a complex situation related to applying in the Marketplace.” For additional explanations on circumstances that qualify for Special Enrollment please visit: https://www.healthcare.gov/how-can-i-get-coverage-outside-of-open-enrollment/#part=2.

Additionally, for customers who are “in-line,” meaning they have attempted previous enrollment by the March 31 deadline and experienced complications not within their control, assistance is available. Please see the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid guidelines for further instructions, found here: http://marketplace.cms.gov/help-us/in-line-sep.pdf.

Two New Funding Opportunities from AHRQ

The Agency for Healthcare Research (AHRQ) will be providing two new funding opportunities for the purpose of increasing patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR), specifically in the primary care setting. The first research grant will go to up to eight regional cooperatives that can disseminate PCOR findings into primary care practice, through the use of evidence-base quality improvement strategies. Applicants must work in collaboration with the primary care facilities as they utilize the PCOR findings for managing hyperlipidemia and hypertension, as well as the use of aspirin in preventing heart disease and smoking cessation.

The second funding opportunity asks researchers to investigate the external evaluation of this initiative to distribute and integrate PCOR findings into primary care and improving heart health. AHRQ expects funding for this grant to come through in early 2015.

Applicants must use evidence-based quality improvements and work with a primary care practice to implement the PCOR evidence. In addition, grantees are expected to evaluate their initiatives in order to contribute to the overarching evaluation. Interested applicants should note letters of intent are due May 23, 2014, and completed applications due June 3, 2014. For more information please visit: AHRQ Funding or AHRQ Funding 2.

2014 NIMHD Translational Health Disparities Course

The following is an announcement from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities:

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) will again host a course on the science of health disparities this summer. The course will take place on the campus of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, from August 11-22, 2014. This two-week intensive course will provide specialized instruction on the concepts, principles, methods, and applications of health disparities science, practice, and policy. It will also integrate principles and practice of community engagement. Nationally and internationally recognized experts in health disparities science will lead individual sessions.

Cost: The course is free, but admission is competitive, and daily attendance is mandatory. Participants are responsible for transportation, room, and board.
How to Apply: Submit an application via the NIMHD website at www.nimhd.nih.gov from April 14, 2014 to May 22, 2014. Applications will only be accepted online.

All application materials, including recommendation letters, must be submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. EST on May 22, 2014 for consideration. For more information, including application requirements, visit: http://www.nimhd.nih.gov/courseHD-2013revised02.html.

Call for Applications: Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training for Professionals

HRSA is soliciting applications for the FY 2014 Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) for Professionals grant program. The grant program aims to expand the mental health and substance abuse workforce serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing or who have developed a recognized behavioral health disorder.

Grantees will be expected to expand the behavioral health workforce by supporting pre-degree clinical internships and field placements for students at accredited master’s-level schools and programs of social work, psychology, marriage and family therapy, psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner, and professional counseling that require a pre-degree clinical field placement in behavioral health; as well as, supporting doctoral-level health service psychology internship programs (including health services psychology, clinical psychology and counseling psychology) and/or doctoral-level health service psychology schools and programs.

You may view this announcement by clicking on the following link http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=hrsa-14-077.

A technical assistance call is scheduled for applicants:

Thursday, April 24, 2014 at 3:00 pm (ET)
Call-in Number: 1-888-972-6714
Participant Code: 3548921
Adobe Connect Link: https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/bhwta042414
For replay information (The recording will be available until 11:59 pm ET June 24, 2014): 866-566-0619; Passcode: 6414

Legislation to Address SGR Passed into Law

On April 1, 2014, President Obama passed into law the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-93). The legislation moved quickly through Congress just prior to the expiration of the then-current Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) payment patch. The bill was first introduced to the House on March 26, 2014 by Representative Joseph Pitts (R-PA), and was passed by the House of Representatives on March 27. The Senate version of bill passed on March 31. The legislation averts a 24% cut in Medicare payments to physicians by extending the SGR for one year (through March 31, 2015). Access the full text of the legislation here.