HRSA Releases Findings from Survey on Nurse Practitioners

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recently released highlights from their 2012 National Sample Survey of Nurse Practitioners. The survey was completed by nearly 13,000 randomly selected licensed Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and gathered information on their education, certifications, and practice patterns.

According to the survey, as of 2012, the NP workforce had an estimated 154,000 licensed providers with over 132,000 working in a position requiring an NP credential. The study also asked participants about their practice specialties and specialty services. The top reported specialty of NPs was primary care, followed by internal medicine and surgical specialties.

To read the highlights in full, visit: http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/supplydemand/nursing/nursepractitionersurvey/.

Connecticut and Minnesota Pass Legislation to Recognize APRNs as Full Practice Providers

Connecticut and Minnesota passed legislation that allows Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to practice to the full extent of their education and training. On May 8, 2014, Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy signed into law Senate Bill 36. The legislation grants full practice authority to APRNs who have worked for three years under a collaborative practice agreement with a physician. This new law will take effect July 1, 2014.

On May 14, 2014, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton signed Senate 511 into law, effectively removing the permanent collaborative practice agreement requirement for new nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists (CNSs). The new law states that after a NP or CNS has completed 2,080 hours of practice under a collaborative agreement with a physician or APRN, this agreement is no longer required. It also repeals some restrictions on certified registered nurse anesthetist practice. The legislation becomes effective January 1, 2015.

AACN supports all APRNs being able to practice to the full extent of their education and training. Decades of evidence shows that APRN care is safe and of high quality. This position is not one held solely by national nursing organizations, but also by other highly regarded entities such as the Macy Foundation, National Governors Association, AARP, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The IOM is a non-government agency that develops authoritative, evidence-based recommendations on national healthcare issues. In the IOM’s report on The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, its first key message to policy makers and the public is that “nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.” The first recommendation under this key message
is that “scope of practice barriers should be removed.” The report clearly documents that the educational standards and years of research serve as rationale for why APRNs should be full practice providers.

To view AACN’s advocacy work on removing APRN scope of practice barriers, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/aprn-scope-of-practice.

Call for Nominations: 2014 AACN Policy Luminary Award

Each year, AACN recognizes an outstanding nursing leader whose significant contributions in the policy arena work to advance the nursing profession. Presented to this individual at AACN’s Fall Semiannual Meeting, the Policy Luminary Award has highlighted some of nursing’s most prominent leaders. AACN’s Government Affairs Committee is now seeking nominations for this year’s award.

Each nomination package should include two letters of recommendation from peers, the nominee’s CV, and a one page bio-sketch. Materials should be submitted to AACN’s Government Affairs and Grassroots Manager Lauren Inouye at Linouye@aacn.nche.edu.

Nominations are due Monday, June 23, 2014, by 5pm ET. For more information on the Policy Luminary Award, including past recipients, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/membership/awards/CallforNomPolicy.pdf.

AACN Submits Senate Testimony on Research Innovation

On April 29, 2014, the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations held a hearing Driving Innovation through Federal Investments to explore how funding impacts the progress of innovation through research. In her opening statement, Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) emphasized, “It’s not an understatement to argue that federal investment in research is an investment in America’s future. This realization has led me, and many of my colleagues, to consider some difficult questions.”

To help provide insight to this point and others, the committee invited an expert panel of witnesses from federal agencies, including:

- John P. Holdren, PhD, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President of the United States
- Ernest Moniz, PhD, Secretary, Department of Energy
- Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD, Director, National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- France A. Córdova, PhD, Director, National Science Foundation
- Arati Prabhakar, PhD, Director, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense

NIH Director Francis Collins described the impact funding cuts would have on the agency’s ability to support existing and future projects, noting, “The fiscal situation for biomedical research in the United States is slowing the momentum of scientific discovery and innovation, leading some to forgo careers in biomedical sciences. The past several years have been challenging for us. Since 2003, the NIH has gradually lost purchasing power due to inflation. In 2013, the sequester cut more than $1.5 billion in funding for groundbreaking medical research and affected the morale of the scientific community. This resulted in 752 fewer grants in FY 2013.”

The committee invited the public to submit testimony on this issue, to which over 100 outside organizations responded, including AACN. AACN’s testimony discussed how nurse scientists contribute to the body of evidence-based practice and innovative tools that improve healthcare decision-making and delivery among patients, their families, and providers. Moreover, funding through agencies including NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the Department of Defense provide critical support for their work: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/government-affairs/Witness-Testimony-4-2014.pdf.

The hearing is archived and can be viewed here: Webcast. For a full list of submitted written testimony, visit: Written Testimony.

National Nurses Week Celebrated May 6-12, 2014

Recognizing the vast contributions of America’s nurses, this year’s National Nurses Week celebrated the positive difference nurses make in the lives of patients across the country. Comprised of over 3.1 million dedicated individuals serving in all sectors of our healthcare system, nurses provide direct patient care, advance healthcare science, and improve the quality and safety of care delivery. In recognition of these contributions, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) along with the bipartisan support of 27 additional cosponsors, introduced H.Res. 540, Supporting the goals and ideals of National Nurses Week on May 6, 2014, through May 12, 2014. AACN supported the introduction of this legislation, an effort led by the American Nurses Association.

Dr. Wakefield, PhD, RN

In honor of National Nurses Week, HRSA Administrator Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, shared her reflections on her inspiring career trajectory and on how nurses are empowered to lead the profession in a changing healthcare environment. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) featured an article, The Nursing Profession: A Platform for Leadership in which Dr. Wakefield recalls her transition from nursing practice and academia in her hometown of Devils Lake, North Dakota, to the policy making arena in Washington, DC. Unsure of whether to accept a Legislative Assistant position for a U.S. Senator, Dr. Wakefield describes how AACN’s CEO Polly Bednash highly encouraged her to accept this opportunity. Dr. Wakefield later became the first nurse to serve as Administrator of HRSA, and since 2009, has been responsible for leading the agency’s work to strengthening the healthcare workforce, building healthy communities, and achieving health equity.

In her statement, Dr. Wakefield shares four valuable lessons which have served her well over the years: “The first is that nurses need to lean into change. The second; look for opportunities where others see limitations. The third lesson is that saying ‘I can’t’ is rarely a good option. The fourth lesson is to always be ready to lend a hand.” Administrator Wakefield is a defining example of how nurses are uniquely positioned to grasp change and create opportunities to advance the profession. “There is a world of opportunity to leverage the profession’s ideas and expertise—particularly if we’re open to innovation in the face of obstacles.” To read the full excerpt by Dr. Wakefield, visit: http://www.rwjf.org/en/blogs/human-capital-blog/2014/05/the_nursing_professi.html.

Also featured during National Nurses Week was an exclusive interview with two of Congress’s six nurses, Representatives Lois Capps, RN, (D-CA) and Diane Black, RN, (R-TN). In the interview with the RWJF Human Capital Blog, the Congresswomen were asked about how their experiences in nursing have shaped their current careers in Congress. Both offered valuable insight on how being a nurse is still part of who they are today. To read the full interview please visit: http://www.rwjf.org/en/blogs/human-capital-blog/2014/05/two_nurses_servingi.html.

On May 7, 2014, the much anticipated screening of “The American Nurse” premiered at the American Film Institute’s Silver Spring Theatre and Cultural Center. The documentary by Carolyn Jones and producer Lisa Frank, captivated audiences with the story of five registered nurses (RNs) working across America. For more about the documentary and to view the trailer please visit: www.americannursemovie.com, National Nurses Week concluded Monday, May 12, 2014, in celebration of the birthday of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale.
HRSA Seeks Volunteer Grant Reviewers

The Health Resources and Services Administration’s Office of Federal Assistance Management, Division of Independent Review, is currently in search of volunteers from diverse backgrounds to be part of a peer review team. Grant reviewers should have expertise within health professions training, HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health services, organ donation/transplantation, primary care for underserved populations, and rural health care. Qualified applicants can now apply through HRSA’s recently launched new peer-Reviewer Recruitment Module database. For more information and to apply, visit: https://rrm.grantsolutions.gov/AgencyPortal/hrsa.aspx.

HHS Releases New Statistics on Health Insurance Marketplace Enrollment

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released data on May 1, 2014 related to the Health Insurance Marketplace’s first enrollment period, October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014, stating, “Over 8 million people have selected a plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace ([State Based Marketplace] SBM and [Federally-facilitated Marketplace] FFM) through March 31 (including additional special enrollment period (SEP) activity reported through Saturday, April 19).” HHS further reports 5.4 million signed up through the Federally-facilitated Marketplace, and the remaining 2.6 million signed up in State-Based Marketplaces.

Among the reported statistics highlighting enrollees was the young adult group, ages 18-34, which accounted for roughly 2.2 million newly enrolled in the Marketplace. Medicaid and CHIP enrollment increased, with more than 4.8 million new sign-ups since the marketplaces opening in October 2013. Additional statistics are available by state, gender, race, and ethnicity of enrollees.

To read the full HHS issue brief, visit: http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/2014/MarketPlaceEnrollment/Apr2014/ib_2014Apr_enrollment.pdf.

Upcoming AHRQ Webinar Focuses on Patient Online Reviews

On June 3, 2014, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) will host a free webinar titled Public Reporting of Patients’ Comments with Quality Measures: How Can We Make It Work? With the growing usage of patient online reviews to rate health providers, researchers at AHRQ are focusing on how standardized measures can be applied to patients’ comments to accurately reflect quality and representation of the providers. “In this Webcast, researchers will discuss an ongoing AHRQ study of methods for eliciting representative patient comments and reporting those comments in a coherent manner with standardized measures of physician quality, including [the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems] CAHPS® measures of patient experience and clinical measures of patient treatment.”

The webinar will be moderated by Dale Shaller, Managing Director, CAHPS Database; Shaller Consulting Group, Stillwater, MN, and speakers include Steven Martino, PhD, Behavioral Scientist, RAND, Pittsburgh, PA; Rachel Grob, PhD, Director of National Initiatives, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; and Mark Schlesinger, PhD, Professor of Health Policy, Yale School of Public Health, New Haven, CT.

The webinar will take place from 1:00-2:00 PM ET, on June 3. For more information on the webinar and how to register please visit: https://event.on24.com/eventRegistration/EventLobbyServlet?target=registration.jsp&eventid=785964&sessionid=1&key=B84EC71195FA339AEE4F1C36EE42AD2B&sourcepage=register.