AACN’s Fall 40th Anniversary Celebration: Congressional Events

AACN’s Government Affairs Committee and staff are thrilled to present our membership with exciting policy events for the 40th Anniversary Celebration.

Saturday, October 31, 2009, 6:00-7:00 pm the Committee will host a State Grassroots Liaisons Business meeting. Location: Salon G, J.W. Marriott Hotel.

Monday, November 2, 2009, 7:15-7:50 am the Committee will host an informal breakfast discussion on Preparing for Your Capitol Hill Visits. Location: Salon F&G, J.W. Marriott Hotel.

Monday, November 2, 2009, 1:00-4:00 pm AACN members are encouraged to make Capitol Hill visits. Bus service will be provided to and from the JW Marriott to Capitol Hill. Bus information will be available at the meeting. There is still time to schedule your visits if you have not already done so!

Please Join Us for AACN’s Congressional Reception

Monday, November 2, 2009 from 4:30-6:30pm AACN members are invited to attend the AACN Congressional Reception in the elegant Gold Room of the Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2168. House and Senate staff from states across the country will be in attendance and AACN is honored to have had the following Representatives respond to AACN’s invitation for the reception. Staff and members of Congress continue to RSVP! Please plan to attend this extremely important Congressional networking event.

Representative Lois Capps, RN (D-CA)
Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX)
Representative Steven LaTourette (R-OH)
Representative Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ)
Representative Glenn Thompson (R-PA)
The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services

Tuesday, November 3, 2009, 8:30-10:00 am Government Affairs Committee Chair Dr. Teri Murray will give a retrospective on 40 years of AACN policy work, followed by an address on healthcare reform from Secretary Sebelius.

Healthcare Reform: The AACN Update

** While AACN supports many provisions in the current healthcare reform proposals circulating, AACN is a nonpartisan organization and does not take an official stance on the entirety of any one bill or proposal. The information below provides both an overview of current activities at the federal level and AACN’s position on specific provisions.**

Status in the Senate

On October 14, 2009, the Senate Finance Committee (SFC) approved their bill with a vote of 14-9. Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) joined all 13 committee Democrats in support of America’s Healthy Future Act of 2009, which would cost an estimated $829 billion over 10 years. Presently, the two Senate bills are being merged. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), Senate Finance and HELP Committee Chairmen Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) will be leading this process.

In a measure to advocate for the critical nursing workforce provisions in both Senate bills, such as the reauthorization of the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs (HELP) and the inclusion of the Medicare Graduate Nursing Education demonstration project (SFC), the Nursing Community sent a letter to Sens. Reid, Baucus, Harkin, and Dodd requesting these provisions remain in the merged bill. For more information see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/npb.htm

On Monday, October 26, 2009, Senator Reid announced that the final Senate bill will include a public insurance option in which states can opt-out. This has received significant criticism from the Republican Senators. The Democratic Conference will be briefed on the full package on Tuesday, October 27, 2009. The final bill is not expected to go to the floor until there is a Congressional Budget Office score.

AACN Senate Advocacy

AACN continues to support the inclusion of the Nurse Education, Expansion, and Development (NEED) Act (S. 497) in the final Senate healthcare reform package. Since 2003, AACN has supported this important legislation, which will offer nursing schools flexible funding to hire, recruit, and retain faculty, as well as expand infrastructure, among other
objectives. In order to move this legislation through healthcare reform, it is critical that additional Senators sign on to co-sponsor S. 497.

Please consider taking action today by sending a message to your Senator using this link: http://capwiz.com/aacn/issues/alert/?alertid=13718161

The bill merger is expected to be completed the week of October 26, 2009, after which floor debate will begin in the Senate. This will be an opportunity for Senators who are not on the HELP or Finance Committees to weigh-in on the healthcare reform discussion. The Senate leadership is taking a measured approach to ensure that they have the 60 votes needed to pass the legislation. Floor debate will last at least two weeks.

**Status in the House**

The House continues to negotiate the *America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009* as they prepare it for floor action. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) are working closely with the House Tri-Committee Chairs to prepare a final healthcare reform bill that will pass with a majority vote. House Republicans and Democratic members of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition continue to express concerns of the cost of the healthcare reform bill.

After the final House and Senate bills are completed, a conference process will commence between the House and Senate.

As Congress continues to debate and deliberate healthcare reform, AACN will keep you apprised of important information on this issue. For more information on healthcare reform and the proposals discussed above, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/npb.htm

**House and Senate Appropriations Update**

The new fiscal year began on October 1, 2009. A continuing resolution was passed and signed by the President on September 30, 2009 to fund the government at FY 2009 levels until the end of October when the FY 2010 appropriations process can be completed. Possible actions Congress could take to complete the FY 2010 appropriations process are a “minibus,” in which unrelated appropriations bills are merged into one package, or a long-term continuing resolution that would fund the federal government at the FY 2009 levels.

For funding information on AACN federal programs of interest see: House Passed LHHS Appropriations Bill http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/pdf/FY10ChartHouse.pdf

AACN will keep you apprised of important information as Congress continues to deliberate the FY 2010 appropriations process.
Preparing for H1N1

AACN has been engaged in conversations with White House officials and other key stakeholders such as the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) regarding the role nursing schools could play in preparations for and implementation of the H1N1 vaccination. One of the most pressing barriers to the effective and efficient administration of the vaccination is the lack of personnel.

Clearly, schools of nursing are ideal partners for state and local health departments. AACN is currently in the process of surveying members regarding their H1N1 preparations to determine best practices and how schools of nursing have been affected by H1N1 breakouts.

Track AACN Supported Legislation

Each Congress, AACN works on a bipartisan basis with Congressional staff and legislators to promote and advance nursing education, research, and other priorities of interest to AACN’s membership. As you consider ways to engage in the policy process, please use AACN’s support bill list as a reference. For the bills included on this list, AACN staff has assisted in the drafting process or has offered support based on the priorities set by AACN’s legislative agenda.

To track AACN supported legislation see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/SupportedLegislation.htm

For more information on AACN’s legislative agenda see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/agenda.htm