Congress Continues Healthcare Reform Conference

The second session of the 111th Congress began on January 5, 2010 with healthcare reform remaining as a top agenda item for Congress and the Administration. As reported earlier, the Senate passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3950) with a vote of 60-39 on December 24, 2009. This historic vote advanced Congress to the next step in the legislative process.

Over the past month, the House and Senate leadership have been working closely with the Administration to negotiate the differences between the two bills. The conference process will be challenging as the House and Senate bills are distinct and include major variations such as the public option plan in the House bill. Earlier this month, many theorized that the Senate bill would move forward as the final healthcare package since it narrowly passed. However, due to the recent special-election race in Massachusetts and the victory of Senator Scott Brown (R-MA), the Democrats no longer hold a supermajority in the Senate. This victory presents serious complications as Congress works to move healthcare reform forward.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), and the Administration will now need to work with their Democrat colleagues in the House and Senate to determine the next steps. Reports suggest that the Senate bill is still an option to present as the final healthcare reform package. Others suggest an even more scaled-back health reform bill will be necessary.

Prior to the political barriers currently facing the healthcare reform negotiations, AACN and the Nursing Community sent letters to Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid urging them to retain the critical provisions that support nursing education and practice. To read more about AACN’s work on healthcare reform, as well as view copies of the House and Senate legislation, visit www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/npb.htm.

AACN’s First Annual Student Policy Summit

AACN’s Inaugural Student Policy Summit will take place March 21-23, 2010 in Washington, DC. This opportunity is open to baccalaureate and graduate students at AACN member schools who have an interest in nursing and health policy. The Summit will coincide with AACN’s Spring Annual Meeting and will feature a variety of plenary speakers, panels, and networking opportunities. AACN is thrilled to announce that, to date, distinguished nursing leaders Dr. Mary Wakefield, RN, FAAN, Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and Darlene Curley, MS, RN, Executive Director of the Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence and former Maine State Legislator are confirmed presenters for the Summit.
The registration rate for the Summit is $149 (registration is limited). A small hotel room block for the AACN Student Policy Summit is available now. Students can make reservations at the Washington Marriott located at 1221 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC for $179 a night. Book rooms early to reserve this great rate by calling 1-800-228-9290. The hotel is located just a few blocks from the Fairmont Washington where most of the Summit activities will take place.

Additionally, AACN will sponsor one Summit scholarship for an outstanding nursing student. More information on the Summit agenda, meeting registration, scholarship application, and accommodations can be found online at www.aacn.nche.edu/government/sps.htm.

Work Continues on FY 2011 Appropriations

Although the FY 2010 Appropriations for the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs was only finalized last month, the Nursing Community is hard at work on the FY 2011 process. AACN and other national nursing organizations will be meeting with key Congressional staffers in the coming weeks to work on securing a sound investment in nursing education for FY 2011. President Obama is currently scheduled to release his draft budget to Congress on February 1, 2010. For more information on FY 2010 appropriations see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/appropriations.htm

HRSA Announces Faculty Development Grant

On January 20, 2010, HRSA announced the Faculty Development: Integrated Technology into Nursing Education and Practice Initiative under the Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants. The purpose of this initiative is to provide support to nursing collaboratives focused on integrating technology for faculty development. The goal is to expand the capacity of nursing schools to educate students for 21st century healthcare practice.

Eligible applicants are accredited schools of nursing capable of carrying out the initiative's purpose. Any program of nurse education must be accredited by a national nurse education accrediting agency, such as the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), or state approval agency recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

The program contact is Nancy Douglas-Kersellius, Nurse Consultant. She can be reached by phone at 301-443-6333 or by email at ndouglas@hrsa.gov for technical assistance or questions regarding this announcement and the Faculty Development: ITNEP Initiative. The submission deadline for this Faculty Development grant is February 25, 2010 at 8:00 p.m.

The program announcement number is HRSA-10-061. The CFDA number is 93.359. You may access the HRSA Funding Opportunities Web site at http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/default.htm and www.grants.gov for additional information and application instructions.

Prospective applicants may register at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription.jsp to receive email notification for other HRSA funding opportunities.
Nurses Impacting Policy

Nancy Donaldson, DNSc, RN, FAAN
Dr. Donaldson is currently the Director of the Center for Research and Innovation in Patient Care at the University of California-San Francisco School of Nursing. Dr. Donaldson was recently appointed by the Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services, to the National Advisory Council for Healthcare Research and Quality. Dr. Donaldson’s two decades of work as a nurse researcher will certainly be a great asset to the Council who advises the critical work of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Norma Martinez Rogers, PhD, RN, FAAN
Dr. Martinez Rogers, who currently serves as President of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses, was recently appointed to the newly formed Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Payment Access Commission (MACPAC). Established by Congress in the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009, MACPAC is tasked with providing annual reports on the access and payment issues facing Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries. “Dr. Martinez Rogers’ experience as a nurse leader and advocate will be critical to the commission’s charge to advise Congress on Medicaid and CHIP issues,” remarked AACN CEO and Executive Director, Polly Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN.

RWJF Releases a Gallup Survey on Nursing Influence

“*We must build on the widespread trust of nurses’ expertise as an essential component in leading and implementing reform.*”

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, MBA, President and CEO, RWJF

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) released the results from a new Gallup survey, *Nursing Leadership from Bedside to Boardroom*, conducted among diverse opinion leaders on the influence of nurses. Not surprisingly, the survey found nurses as one of the most trusted sources of health information. However, the opinion leaders surveyed (who included academic leadership, representatives from insurance companies, and corporate leaders, as well as health services, government, and industry thought leaders) indicated that they viewed nurses as having very little influence on healthcare reform. The respondents also indicated that they felt nurses should, in fact, have more influence on reform. AACN and the Nursing Community continue to strive to ensure the voice of nurses is heard on Capitol Hill throughout the healthcare reform process. For more information on these efforts, visit [www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/npb.htm](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/npb.htm), [www.thenursingcommunity.org](http://www.thenursingcommunity.org)

National Advisory Council for Nursing Research Meeting

The National Advisory Council for Nursing Research held its 70th meeting on January 19-20, 2010 at the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). Dr. Michael Gottesman, NIH Deputy Director for Intramural Research and a number of NINR scientists, presented along with NINR Director Patricia Grady, PhD, RN, FAAN to the audience of NINR constituents. Kathleen Potempa, DNSc, RN, Dean at the University of Michigan School of Nursing, and AACN President-elect, is a member of the Council. For more information, visit [http://www.ninr.nih.gov/AboutNINR/NACNR/](http://www.ninr.nih.gov/AboutNINR/NACNR/)
AACN Responds to AMA Scope of Practice Data Series

AACN joined with national nurse practitioner organizations and other stakeholder to provide comments on the Nurse Practitioners Module of the AMA Scope of Practice Data Series. In a letter to the AMA dated December 8, 2009, it was articulated that the document contains numerous factual misrepresentations and misleading conclusions. The letter pointed out that “a multitude of studies that demonstrate the safety and high quality of care provided by nurse practitioners appear to have been disregarded in the module.” AACN continues to work with our advanced practice colleagues to monitor AMA’s response and dispel misinformation. To view a copy of this letter, visit http://www.aanp.org/AANPCMS2/AboutAANP/Marketing+and+PR/AMA+Scope+of+Practice+Data.htm

Spring and Summer Policy Internships at AACN

AACN’s Government Affairs department is currently accepting applications for Spring and Summer 2010 unpaid internships at our Washington, DC headquarters. Interns receive hands-on experience in nursing education and research advocacy including covering hearings, attending Nursing Community meetings and events, and participating in activities on Capitol Hill.

Consider bringing your passion for nursing advocacy to Washington for a semester. For more information on applying for this opportunity, visit http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/GAInternship.htm

Help Create New Nursing Advocates

The importance and relevance of advocacy at the national level is critical for the profession. Over the years, nursing has grown more engaged in shaping healthcare policy, yet more work needs to be done. The profession will benefit greatly from a new generation of nurses who are politically active. Consider being a change agent for this progress by having your students and faculty sign up to receive this monthly policy newsletter. Once your faculty and students register, they will receive AACN’s Policy Beat and other periodic action alert messages. This information offers an easy entry into the nursing advocacy world.

To register for AACN’s Grassroots Network:
http://capwiz.com/aacn/mlm/signup/

Once your faculty and students register, they will receive AACN’s Policy Beat and other periodic action alert messages.