Strengthening the Primary Care Workforce

On June 17, 2010, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced that $250 million will be invested in the education of primary care providers. Made possible through the Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act’s Public Health Investment Fund, this support is expected to introduce into the healthcare system an additional 16,000 primary care providers over the next five years.

The investment aims to provide additional primary care residency positions, support physician assistant training in primary care, and encourage graduate nursing students to complete their degree full-time. Additionally, the funds will be allocated towards the generation of nurse-managed primary care clinics and will enable states to expand individualized primary care workforces in correspondence to the increasing demand for treatment. The investment attests to the imperative role of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and public health nurses in today’s healthcare setting as well as the importance of funding for continued education in the nursing profession. Please find the information below for the nursing related grants.

**Nurse Managed Health Clinics:** The purpose of this initiative will be to provide federal funding to support the development and operation of Nurse-Managed Health Clinics. The call that was hosted on June 23, 2010, will be recorded and will remain available until 5:00 pm EST on the closing date of July 19, 2010 by calling 1-800-489-7545.

**Grant Closes:** July 19, 2010 at 5:00 PM ET
**Funding Opportunity Number:** HRSA-10-282
**CFDA Number:** 93.515

**Advanced Nursing Education Expansion Program:** The program provides graduate nursing students (Nurse Practitioners and Certified Nurse-Midwives) with stipends, educational expenses, or other reasonable living expenses for $22,000 per year, for a maximum of two years per student.

**Grant Closes:** July 19, 2010 at 8:00 PM ET.
**Funding Opportunity Number:** HRSA-10-281
**CFDA Number:** 93.513

For more information, see:
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/sebeliushealthcare.htm
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/granthealthcare.htm
Loan Repayment for Service in Underserved Areas

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is recruiting 4,000 new individuals to receive educational loan repayment awards made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Primary care professionals who have completed their education can receive an initial award of $50,000 for two years of service and up to $145,000 for five years. This service will be completed in areas with little to no access to basic health care. APRNs including primary care nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, and psychiatric nurse specialists are eligible to apply.

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration, more than 70% of NHSC providers who have completed their service choose to work in underserved areas. The application deadline is July 29, 2010.

If you are interested in applying or have further questions about the program, there will be a conference call on July 15, 2010 from 2:30-4:30 pm ET: 1-888-889-0974, passcode 8360318

For further details, see:
http://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/

To apply, see:
http://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment/apply.htm

AHRQ Call for RO1 Health Services Research Projects

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is in the process of funding large RO1 research projects focusing on the agency’s priority areas including: comparative effectiveness, health information technology, prevention care, patient safety, and innovations among others. The total amount of funding will not exceed $500,000 annually for the entire project period.

Grant Closes: January 7, 2012
Funding Opportunity Number: PA-09-070
CFDA Number(s): 93.226

For more information, see:
http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?&mode=VIEW&flag2006=false&oppId=44554

AACN Faculty Link

On June 22, 2010, AACN Faculty Link presented a webinar on Health Reform Implications for Nursing Education. Over 500 individuals registered for the discussion led by AACN Director of Government Affairs, Dr. Suzanne Begeny. An overview was provided to the attendees that discussed the role of AACN and national nursing organizations during the formation of the health reform legislation, the collective
advocacy, health reform provisions for nursing education, and the work ahead to ensure these provisions are implemented and well funded. Specific examples on nursing education provisions include the reauthorization of the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Program, the Graduate Nurse Education Demonstration Program, and funding for Nurse Managed Health Clinics.

To see a copy of the slides or hear the webcast see:  
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Faculty/FacultyLink/pdf/HealthReform_Begeny.pdf  
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Faculty/FacultyLink/facultylink.htm#2

For more information about AACN’s efforts during health reform see:  
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/npb.htm

**Update FY 2011 Budget & Appropriations**

Reports suggest that the House and Senate will not proceed with a formal budget process for FY 2011 and will instead create funding caps through the supplemental war bill. For FY 2011, it is anticipated that the House will cap appropriations at approximately $1.1 trillion dollars. This is $7 billion below the President’s request that was released in February and $3 billion less than what the Senate Budget Committee proposed.

This action has a direct impact on funding for programs such as the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). The House appropriations subcommittees started considering their bills in late June and it is reported that the Labor Health and Human Services Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over Title VIII and NINR, will not consider their spending bill before the August recess.

Many speculate that a Continuing Resolution (CR) will be passed by Congress to fund the government through the November elections. The CR would provide funding at the FY 2010 levels. There is debate whether Congress will pass a year-long CR or an omnibus spending package that would include all unfinished appropriations bills.

AACN will continue to keep you informed on the FY 2011 budget and appropriations cycle. For more information see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/appropriations.htm

**Extended Medicare Payment Relief for APRNs and Physicians**

While the Medicare funding debate continue in Congress, the House and Senate passed the *Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act of 2010* (HR 3962) that will provide six months of relief from the 21.2% cut in Medicare Part B payments and plans that are linked to Medicare Part B, such as Tri-Care. The bill replaces the cut with a 2.2% bonus from June 1 through November 30, 2010 for providers who bill Medicare Part B directly such as physicians and APRNS (i.e. nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetists, or certified nurse midwives). The legislation was signed into law by the President on June 25, 2010 and provider payments for June can be readjusted to avoid the 21% decrease. For more information on the bill, see:  
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c111:5:/temp/~c111uozmc0-:
“NIH in the 21st Century: The Director’s Perspective”

On June 15, 2010, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing with National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director, Francis Collins. Dr. Collins testified that as NIH moves into the 21st century the institutes and centers will continue to fund research on genetics and basic cell functions. However, there is increasing focus on high-throughput technologies and the development of The Cancer Genome Atlas, the Diabetes Prevention Program, Alzheimer’s disease, autism, and depression. NIH will continue to direct resources toward transforming discovery into health through programs like Therapeutics for Rare and Neglected Diseases and the Clinical and Translational Sciences Award. In the future, NIH would like to focus on how to use preventative scientific evidence, taking into account genetic makeup and environment, to demonstrate behavioral change.

To read a copy of Dr. Collin’s testimony, see: http://energycommerce.house.gov/documents/20100615/Collins.Testimony.06.15.2010.pdf

MedPAC’s June 2010 Report to Congress

On June 23, 2010, Glenn Hackbarth, Chairman of the Medicare Payment and Advisory Commission (MedPAC), testified before the House Energy and Commerce’s Subcommittee on Health. His testimony discussed the findings and recommendations of MedPAC’s June 2010 Report to Congress: Aligning Incentives in Medicare. The report sought to cover three major issues Medicare should address including: (1) the training of the nation’s healthcare workforce, (2) the role of the beneficiary in a reformed health care delivery system, and (3) the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ability to use value-based payment policies and to test and adopt innovative payment and delivery mechanisms.

The report also covered such issues as:
- Medicare’s ability to innovate
- Medicare’s role in quality improvement
- Coordinating care of dual-beneficiaries

To read a copy of Mr. Hackbarth’s testimony see: http://energycommerce.house.gov/documents/20100618/Hackbarth.Testimony.06.23.2010.pdf

Healthcare 411

Healthcare 411 is a bilingual series which is created by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). This resource provides the latest research findings, news, and consumer healthcare information. This audio program can be accessed by keyword or date range. Transcripts are available for these two to ten-minute programs.

To view Healthcare 411, see: http://healthcare411.ahrq.gov/
Now Accepting Nominations for AACN’s Policy Luminary Award

AACN created the Policy Luminary Award to recognize an outstanding nursing leader for his or her public policy achievements. The first recipient of the award was Dr. Mary Wakefield, Administrator of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. Dr. Wakefield’s extensive career in nursing and health policy exemplifies the spirit of the AACN Policy Luminary Award.

AACN’s Government Affairs Committee is seeking nominations for this year’s award. Nominations are due by 5pm ET on Monday, September 27, 2010. Each nomination package should include two letters of recommendation from peers, the nominee’s CV, and a one-page biosketch.

Nominations should be electronically submitted to Government Affairs Assistant Gene Throwe at gthrowe@aacn.nche.edu. Please direct any questions to AACN’s Director of Government Affairs, Suzanne Begeny at 202-463-6930, ext. 247. For more information, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/policylumaward.htm

Preparing for Fall Policy Courses?

As you prepare for your fall policy courses, be sure to encourage your students to sign up for AACN’s Grassroots Network. Through this network, students will be able to respond to action alerts and write their members of Congress as well as receive the AACN Policy Beat publication.

To date, there are nearly 2,500 deans, directors, faculty, students, and interested stakeholders registered to monitor and engage in AACN’s advocacy work. This is a great resource for you students as they learn about new legislation, the appropriations process, and the latest developments as the Administration implements health reform. Also check out AACN’s policy handbook as a resource for your students. Hard copies will be available for purchase in late August. For a free downloadable copy, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/pdf/AACNPolicyHandbook_2010.pdf

To register for AACN’s Grassroots Network:

http://capwiz.com/aacn/mlm/signup/

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