U.S. House of Representatives Vote to Repeal Health Reform

On Wednesday, January 19, 2011, the House of Representatives held a vote on H.R. 2, which would repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act [Public Law 111-148]. With 182 cosponsors, the bill passed by a vote of 245-189. All Republican Representatives voted for the bill with three Democratic Representatives also voting for the measure. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has stated that he would not bring the bill to the Senate floor, and President Obama has stated that he would veto the bill if it passed both chambers. Many of the new Republican members discussed repealing health reform during their campaign platforms and the vote on Wednesday is likely the first of several Republican efforts to repeal healthcare reform.

For more information on H.R. 2 and the Affordable Care Act, see:
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:H.R.2:
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.3590:

AACN’s Student Policy Summit Quickly Reaching Capacity

AACN’s Student Policy Summit will coincide with AACN’s Spring Meeting and be held March 20-22, 2011. Only 47 slots remain so interested students should register soon! This Summit offers baccalaureate and graduate students from AACN member schools an insider’s look at federal policymaking on Capitol Hill. The keynote speaker will be Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, FAAN, Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, who will discuss nursing’s role in health policy and advocacy.

Attendees will also hear the federal agendas of AACN, the American Nurses Association, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, and the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses. Additionally, the students will have a chance to hear from last year’s attendees and how they incorporated their new understanding of health policy into their academic and career roles. The major focus of the Summit will be Capitol Hill visits that students will make with their deans.

AACN is grateful to the Summit’s sponsors, the Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence, the Johnson and Johnson’s Campaign for Nursing’s Future, the University of Kentucky College of Nursing, and Loyola University New Orleans School of Nursing, whose generous donations have helped to support a robust agenda. For more information on the Summit, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/sps.htm and to register see: https://www.aacn.nche.edu/Registration/registration.asp.
AACN Announces Student Policy Summit Scholarship Winners

AACN is delighted to announce the winners of the 2011 Student Policy Summit scholarship contest. AACN received excellent essays from students across the country, making the selection decision extremely difficult. The students were asked to elaborate on their policy interests, why nurses should be engaged in health policy, and their vision for the nursing profession. The student’s statements gave great hope for the profession’s future. Rachel Issacs and Susan Mott, AACN’s scholarship winners, wrote exceptional essays. Rachel who will graduate with her BSN in 2011 from the University of Minnesota, stated “Today, this country is in healthcare transition, as is the nursing profession. The two align at an ideal time as nurses gain education, recognition from other healthcare professions, and as the country moves in a direction to deliver better health care.” Susan is an MSN candidate at Western Michigan University and stated “Nurses have gained the public trust as healthcare providers. Over the next decade, nursing will continue to evolve as a mature profession leading our society to fair and accessible health care for all. I look forward to being a part of that process.”

Update on Fiscal Year 2011 and 2012 Appropriations

Before the House and Senate adjourned for the holiday recess, they passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) on December 21, 2010 that funds the federal government through March 4, 2011 at the fiscal year (FY) 2010 levels. The bill was signed by the President on December 22, 2010.

With work still required to finish the FY 2011 appropriations process, AACN will advocate alongside our colleagues in the nursing and healthcare communities to ensure a continued and increased investment in programs that support nursing education and research. In a tight fiscal climate, it is difficult to anticipate the outcome of the final FY 2011 funding levels. Forecasting funding levels for FY 2012 also remains difficult. The Republican controlled House of Representatives has proposed cutting non-security discretionary funding to the FY 2008 levels. If enacted, this would be a 56% cut to the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs, bringing the funding level from $243.8 million in FY 2010 to $156.05 million. Funding for the National Institute of Nursing Research would be cut by 6% from $145.58 million to $137.48 million. AACN will be working with coalitions such as the Nursing Community, the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition, the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, and the Coalition for Health Funding to protect current funding levels and request an increase.

Additionally, President Obama will postpone releasing his FY 2012 budget request until the week of February 14, 2011. The President’s budget is historically released the first Monday of February. For more information about nursing education and research funding, see: http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Government/appropriations.htm.

Welcoming the 112th Congress

After the November 2010 elections, the Republicans gained control of the House of Representatives. Of the 435 members in the House, 89 are beginning their first term, 242 are Republicans, and 193 are Democrats. On January 5, 2011, Representative John Boehner (R-OH) was sworn in as the 53rd Speaker of the House and pledged to advance an agenda focused on fiscal discipline and economic growth. Representative Eric Cantor (R-VA) now holds the office of the Majority Leader, and Representative Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) is the House Majority Whip. Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is the Democratic Leader, and Representative Steny Hoyer (D-MD) will serve as the Democratic Whip. AACN looks forward to working with the newly elected members and leadership.
GAO Announces PCORI Methodology Committee

On January 21, 2011, Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States and head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), announced the appointment of 15 members to the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute’s Methodology Committee. “This Methodology Committee has the responsibility of helping PCORI develop and update methodological standards and guidance for comparative clinical effectiveness research. The men and women named today bring impressive credentials and experience to this important task,” Dodaro said. AACN is thrilled at the appointment of Robin Newhouse, PhD, RN, Assistant Dean, Doctor of Nursing Practice Program and Associate Professor, Organizational Systems and Adult Health, University of Maryland School of Nursing. For more information, see: http://www.gao.gov/about/hcac/index.html.

NINR National Advisory Council’s 73rd Meeting

The National Advisory Council for the National Institute for Nursing Research (NINR) held their 73rd meeting January 18-19, 2011 in Washington, DC. During the public session of the proceedings, NINR Director Patricia Grady, PhD, RN, FAAN, presented on the NINR 25th Anniversary celebrations, the Institute budget and awards, and other news around the National Institutes of Health. NINR staff reported on the number of speaking engagements Dr. Grady made in 2010, and Dr. Antonio Scarpa, Director of the Center for Scientific Review, gave an update on NIH's peer review process. The afternoon was rounded out by updates on symptom management and monitoring research, the NINR strategic plan, and reviews of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Biennial Report. The closed session of the Council meeting was used for the review of applications.

Healthy People 2020 Objectives Available

On December 2, 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) unveiled the nation’s new 10-year goals and objectives for health promotion and disease prevention. The launch, marking the beginning of Healthy People 2020, included remarks from the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Howard K. Koh; HHS Chief Technology Officer, Todd Park; Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and Health Officer, Dr. Jonathan Fielding; Associate Dean for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Dr. Shiriki Kumanyika; and many others.

For more details about the initiative and how you can get involved, visit the newly redesigned Healthy People Web site at www.healthypeople.gov. The Web site allows users to view the new Healthy People 2020 topic areas and objectives, tailor information to their needs, and explore evidence-based resources for implementation.

IOM Future of Nursing: Regional Action Coalitions Applications

Regional Action Coalitions (RACs) are a key component of the Campaign for Action, advanced by RWJF following the release of the report, Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health. Led by nursing and non-nursing leaders, RACs include a diverse group of stakeholders from a variety of sectors whose mission is to work together to transform nursing at the state and local levels. RACs are being launched throughout the U.S. in phases, beginning with five pilot RACs that formed in October 2010. The five pilot RACs were launched in California, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, and New York. These RACs are already building teams and moving to action.

In January 2011 the Campaign released a call for applications inviting leaders in states and regions across the country to apply to become RACs. This second phase will expand RACs to eight to ten additional states/regions. For more information, see: http://thefutureofnursing.org/content/regional-action-coalitions http://thefutureofnursing.org/sites/default/files/RACApplication1-18-11.pdf.