

Nursing Legislation in the 110th Congress Amending Title VIII

The Nursing Workforce Development programs [Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.)] support the supply and distribution of qualified nurses to meet our nation's health care needs. Title VIII programs provide the largest source of federal funding for nursing education, offering financial support for nursing education programs, individual students, and nurses. These programs bolster nursing education from entry-level preparation through graduate study. Title VIII programs favor institutions that educate nurses for practice in rural and medically underserved communities.

The list below provides an overview of the legislation for which AACN has assisted in the drafting process or has offered support based on the priorities set forth by the AACN Government Affairs Committee (GAC). Each bill amends Title VIII by creating a new program or enhancing an existing program.

The Nurse Education, Expansion and Development Act (H.R. 772) was introduced on January 31, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Nita Lowey (D-NY), Peter King (R-NY), and Lois Capps, RN (D-CA). The bill would provide capitation or formula grants based on enrollment in schools of nursing. Funds may be used for hiring or retaining current faculty, purchasing educational equipment, enhancing clinical laboratories, repairing and expanding infrastructure, or recruiting students. H.R. 772 was referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. This bill was previously introduced in the 108th and 109th Congress.

The Nurse Education, Expansion and Development Act (S. 446) was introduced on January 31, 2007 and sponsored by Sens. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD). It is the companion bill to H.R. 772 and like its House counterpart, would provide capitation or formula grants based on enrollment to schools of nursing. Funds may be used for hiring new or retaining current faculty, purchasing educational equipment, enhancing clinical laboratories, repairing and expanding infrastructure, or recruiting students. S. 446 was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. This bill was previously introduced in the 109th Congress.

The Nurse Faculty and Physical Therapist Act (S. 1628) was introduced on June 14, 2007 and sponsored by Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Norm Coleman (R-MN), Susan Collins (R-ME), John Kerry (D-MA), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), and Ben Nelson (D-NE). The bill would address the scarcity of qualified nurse faculty by providing grants to schools of nursing to stimulate both enrollments in and graduations from nursing doctoral programs. Grant funds may be used to hire new faculty, retain existing faculty, purchase educational resources, create distance education programs for doctoral nursing and physical therapist education in rural areas, and assist recent graduates in serving as nurse faculty. Priority will be given to those institutions from states experiencing the greatest nurse and nurse faculty shortages. S. 1628 was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee.

Nursing Education and Quality of Health Care Act (S. 1604) was introduced on June 16, 2007 and sponsored by Sens. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Gordon Smith (R-OR). The bill would address patient safety and quality care, nursing faculty development, and the nursing shortage in rural areas. The bill would award grants for demonstration projects that advance the education, delivery, or measurement of quality and patient safety in nursing practice. The bill would provide grants to schools of nursing to create faculty recruitment and distance learning programs, scholarships and loan forgiveness for registered nurses pursuing graduate education, and funds for accelerated nursing programs. S. 1604 was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. This bill was previously introduced in the 109th Congress.

ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING

Nurse Managed Health Clinic (NMHC) Investment Act of 2007 (S. 2112) was introduced on September 27, 2007 and sponsored by Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Daniel Akaka (D-HI). The bill would amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants for the cost of operating nurse-managed health clinics that provide primary care for underserved or vulnerable populations. These clinics are associated with a school, college, or nursing department, federally qualified health center, or independent nonprofit health or social services agency. This bill has been referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Nursing Education Opportunities Act (S. 2230) was introduced on October 25, 2007 and sponsored by Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE). The bill would offer an approach to address both the current nursing shortage and the shortage of doctoral nurse faculty members. By increasing the loan amounts in the Nursing Student Loan Program and clarifying the accelerated nursing programs under Title VIII, this bill would open more opportunities for nursing students to find federal support. Additionally, this bill focuses on a long-term solution to the nursing shortage by providing opportunities for nursing schools to create a doctoral nursing program, share programmatic and faculty resources through a doctoral consortium, and prepare additional nurse educators through the nurse faculty pilot project. These programs would provide a targeted solution to the nurse faculty shortage by establishing and sharing resources. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Nursing Education Opportunities Act (H.R. 4001) was introduced on October 30, 2007 and sponsored by Reps. Charles Boustany (R-LA), Charles Melancon (D-LA), and Ron Lewis (R-KY). The bill would offer an approach to address both the current nursing shortage and the shortage of doctoral nurse faculty members. Like its Senate counterpart (S. 2230), this bill would open more opportunities for nursing students to find federal support. Additionally, this bill focuses on a long-term solution to the nursing shortage by providing opportunities for nursing schools to create a doctoral nursing program, share programmatic and faculty resources through a doctoral consortium, and prepare additional nurse educators through the nurse faculty pilot project. The bill was referred to the House Education and Labor Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Nurses' Higher Education and Loan Repayment Act of 2008 (H.R. 6652) was introduced on July 30, 2008 and sponsored by Reps. Tom Latham (R-IA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU), Corrine Brown (D-FL), G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), Lois Capps, RN (D-CA), Phil English (R-PA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), Ron Kind (D-WI), Michael McNulty (D-NY), John Sarbanes (D-MD), and Christopher Smith (R-NJ). The legislation would provide current students and graduates of nursing master's and doctoral programs with reimbursement for student loans. If selected to participate in this program, these nurses would be required to teach for four years in an accredited school of nursing. The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.