

To: AACN Board of Directors

From: Dr. Jane Kirschling
Chair, AACN Government Affairs Committee

Debbie Campbell
Director, AACN Government Affairs

Date: December 4, 2006

Re: 2007 GAC Priorities for AACN Advocacy Efforts

The Government Affairs Committee (GAC) and AACN staff have re-evaluated their goals based on the changing political environment in Congress as well as the organization's need to advance new initiatives including the evolving roles of the DNP, CNL, and the Nurse Residency Programs. The following legislative, regulatory, and advocacy priorities for 2007 required significant restructuring for the first session of the 110th Congress. In addition, they will require additional resources to achieve positive outcomes in a reasonable timeframe. They are listed in priority order since staff resources and energy are to be directed in that order. AACN staff will report on these issues in their Government Affairs Reports to the AACN membership, GAC briefings, and in Board Reports. **The designation of "Lead," "Actively Participate," and "Monitor" are provided to identify AACN staff, GAC, and membership level of involvement on each issue. They are defined as follows:**

Lead - Take a prominent position for AACN in Congress and the federal agencies. Efforts may include evaluating legislation, signing on to supportive bills, actively lobbying, and leading efforts in coalition, signing on to coalition letters, and developing and implementing a grassroots strategy in support of these issues.

Actively Participate - Take a position on issues, but work within the nursing community allowing another organization to take the leadership role. Efforts may include signing on to legislation, attending coalition meetings, and signing on to coalition letters. Minimal efforts should be spent on evaluating/analyzing legislation and grassroots dissemination strategy.

Monitor - Invest minimal efforts to stay aware of issues. Sign on to coalition letters and minimal attendance at meetings. No grassroots efforts involved.

1. Budget and Appropriations for Title VIII and VII Public Health Service Act Programs

Lead in increasing funding levels for Title VIII and VII programs including the Nursing Workforce Development programs, Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students, Area Health Education Centers, and Curriculum Development and Training Grants for Preparedness. With a continuing resolution filed to continue operating federal programs at current funding levels until early spring, AACN must simultaneously advocate for FY 2007 and FY 2008 funding in the FY 2007 Labor, Health, and Human Services and Education Appropriations

bill. There has been almost a doubling of the budget for Nursing Workforce Development programs (Title VIII) between FY 2001 and FY 2005. In FY 2006, the Nursing Workforce Development programs were given a slight increase of \$530,000 in the Labor Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Conference report, that sustained a 1% cut as did all other non-Veterans' Administration programs. This provided nursing education with a total 0.7% cut for a total appropriation of \$149.68 million. In contrast Health Professions Education programs (Title VII) were cut by 51% and five programs were eliminated entirely. Regardless which party controls Congress, the ongoing military activities in the Middle East, needs for increased homeland security, ongoing hurricane/disaster relief needs will continue to affect the federal budget. **AACN will:** Attend meetings and participate in the work of various coalitions in the nursing community and the health community such as the Nursing Network, Tri-Council for Nursing, Coalition for Health Funding, Friends of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Health Professions and Nursing Education Coalition (HPNEC). Increase the membership and visibility of the House Nursing Caucus. Engage in strategic educational efforts with the National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice (NACNEP), Division of Nursing, and other pertinent HRSA divisions. Identify appropriate nursing education initiatives to lobby for as report language in House, Senate, and conference reports. Host Hill staff briefings, independently and with coalitions, addressing federal nursing education programs. Maintain and further develop the State Grassroots Liaison (SGL) Program and continue refining services and programs for AACN members that stress the importance of political, legislative, and regulatory advocacy. Develop grassroots strategy, member advocacy letters, and talking points to address appropriations. Create opportunities for AACN members to honor appropriations advocates. *(This is an annual effort and ongoing AACN priority. AACN consultants, Wheat Government Relations, will focus efforts on the staff briefing and devise report language on the faculty shortage and Nurse Education Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs for 2007.)*

2. Funding for Nursing Research at the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Lead in advocating for a funding increase for NINR and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including AHRQ, for FY 2007 and FY 2008. NINR reached its doubling over five years in FY 2003 along with other Institutes and Centers at the NIH. However, in FY 2006 the NIH received the smallest percentage increase of 0.5% or \$253 million since 1970. The 1% across the board cut left NIH with \$28.24 billion, almost \$40 million less than FY 2006. NINR is funded at \$137.34 million for FY 2006, a \$750,000 cut. AHRQ is funded at \$318.7 million in funding in FY 2006. **AACN will:** Participate in the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research Funding and other advocacy efforts with Research!America, Coalition for Health Funding, Friends of AHRQ, and the House Nursing Caucus. Identify appropriate nursing research initiatives to lobby for as report language in House, Senate, and conference reports. Continue to work with the Friends of NINR and attend National Advisory Council on Nursing Research (NACNR) meetings. *(This is an annual effort and ongoing AACN priority. Wheat GR will focus efforts here and devise report language for federal initiatives.)*

3. Expand Social Security Act for Nursing Education via Legislation, Regulation, and Administrative Efforts (New & Expanded Goal)

Lead in identifying opportunities to advance the Doctorate of Nursing Practice by changing legislative authorities or regulation that designate education requirements of master's preparation to graduate preparation for Advanced Practice Nurses in Medicare and Medicaid. Evaluate funding opportunities for post-baccalaureate Nurse Residency Programs within Medicare. Now in its seventh year, the AACN-UHC Residency Program would benefit from obtaining a demonstration project through Section 646 of the Medicare Modernization Act or other mechanisms at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Investigate federal funding for the CNL role through Medicare in demonstration grants or at AHRQ to demonstrate patient safety and efficacy. **AACN will:** Explore obtaining the services of a legal consultant to evaluate the extent of changes needed in various areas of the Social Security Act and other laws in 2007. With consultation and advisement work to advance legislative changes in Ways & Means and Finance Committees that may facilitate a change in education requirement language. Work on a regulatory or administrative strategy to address changes needed for the evolving nursing roles. Work with interested parties such as JCAHO or the AHA to evaluate the timing to advance at CMS. Participate in quarterly MedPAC meetings to address emerging issues that may affect nursing education. *(This requires the evaluation, recommendations, and strategy of legal, legislative, and/or regulatory external consultants.)*

4. Establish and Fund a Troops-to-Nurse Teachers Program in the Department of Defense *(New Goal)*

Lead in advocating for a Troops-to-Nurse Teachers (TNT) Program established in the FY 2008 Defense Authorization bill and funded through the Defense Appropriations bill. In the late spring of 2006, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) became interested in addressing the nursing shortage through authorizing legislation, specifically in an amendment in the FY 2007 Senate Defense Authorization bill. Sen. Durbin championed the TNT Program amendment (S. Amdt. 4253) but unfortunately it was dropped from the final conference agreement on the FY 2007 Defense Authorization bill during House-Senate negotiations. **AACN will:** AACN and Wheat Government Relations are working with Sen. Durbin's staff who remain committed to advancing the TNT Program in 2007. To achieve this end, AACN and congressional staff will need to obtain buy-in from key congressional leaders and committee staff in the House of Representatives and the Department of Defense. AACN must educate all members of the Armed Services Committee in the House and Senate on the nursing and nurse faculty shortages as well as the merits of this program in addressing military readiness. In addition, it is likely that the TNT Program concept will need to be modified to ensure that it does not recruit active duty personnel and that it is viewed as a more direct benefit to the Department of Defense. *(AACN leadership and members may need to assist in a grassroots lobbying effort to achieve these goals.)*

5. Advance Capitation Grants Legislation and New Nursing Education Legislation under the Public Health Service Act *(Expanded Goal)*

Lead in reintroducing capitation grants legislation in both chambers in 2007 and work with interested legislators in devising new concepts to advance nursing education. In 2004 and 2005, the Nurse Education, Expansion and Development Act was introduced in the House and in 2006 it was introduced in the Senate. In addition, a more limited capitation bill, the

Nurse Faculty Education Act, was introduced in the Senate in 2005. Since major nursing shortage authorizing legislation in the Nurse Reinvestment Act was passed in 2002, it will be a challenge to pass new legislation in the foreseeable future. However, legislators continue to pursue drafting new concepts into legislation. **AACN will:** Work with lead sponsors in the House and Senate to reintroduce capitation grants legislation in the 110th Congress and obtain cosponsors. Develop grassroots strategy that may include hosting tours at schools of nursing for Hill staff and drafting AACN member support letters and talking points. Work with other nursing and health care organizations to achieve this goal. *(This continues to be a major priority for AACN member schools.)*

6. Reauthorize Title VII and VIII Public Health Service Act Programs

Actively Participate in efforts with Hill staff, the nursing community, health care community, and in the appropriate federal agencies to address modifications and improvements to Title VII and VIII programs that were up for reauthorization in 2003. With an uncertain congressional agenda on health issues in 2006, it is unlikely that reauthorization will be addressed in this session. **AACN will:** As time allows, work with the Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP), Tri-Council for Nursing, and other coalitions on an expedited and rational reauthorization process. Meet with representatives of the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Research Service on reauthorization of programs. *(AACN concepts such as capitation grants and elimination of the 10% cap on doctoral traineeships may be folded into Title VIII reauthorization legislation.)*

EVALUATE EMERGING ISSUES

Throughout the year, AACN staff continuously monitor and evaluate legislation and regulations to identify emerging issues that may impact nursing education and research. Goals that were 2006 priorities are moved to this list since their time and energy commitment is replaced by new priorities. As issues are identified, they are brought to the GAC for evaluation and recommendation for AACN Board or Executive Committee approval. Staff reevaluate priorities based on this final recommendation.