



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING

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TO: Elizabeth Engel, Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Team
FR: Pat Ford-Roegner, MSW, RN, FAAN – CEO, American Academy of Nursing
CC: American Academy of Nursing Board of Directors
DA: January 9, 2009
RE: American Academy of Nursing's Health Care Reform Priorities

Health Policy Priorities and Goals in the Short Term

- The American Academy of Nursing (AAN) supports President-elect Obama's plan to make health insurance affordable and accessible to all Americans. The AAN believes it is critical that all individuals and their families have access to safe, effective, efficient and personalized health care.
- Research-based models – including ones developed and led by nurses – are being utilized all over this country. Many of these models address access, quality and cost, while achieving better patient outcomes. These programs and models should be examined as the incoming administration and the new Congress look at ways to provide coverage to all Americans. We should encourage the replication, and if applicable, expansion of models of care when they demonstrate cost savings and improved health outcomes. Moreover, existing evidence-based research should be used to form “best practices” for health care delivery.

Health Policy Priorities and Goals in the Long Term

- America's health care delivery system must be transformed. It must shift from the current hospital-based, acuity-oriented paradigm towards a system that is patient, family and community-centered and focuses on health promotion and disease prevention. To achieve this important goal, incentives need to be aligned to encourage health care payers, employers, providers and individuals to better prevent, detect and treat health care problems.
- We must also develop a system that can evaluate the effectiveness of health care delivery. This system should identify redundancies, inconsistencies, inefficiencies and variations with diagnostics and treatments. If we create the appropriate evaluation tool, this could lead to lower health care costs without reducing commitments to quality, access and value.
- Our health care system is facing a severe shortage of primary health care providers. One reason for this crisis is that we are not using our current providers appropriately. To meet the current demands of the populations all health care providers – especially nurses – must be able to practice to the full extent of their licenses. This will require an honest debate over which health care providers can and should deliver a broad array of services for various health conditions. There



should be national standards of certificates for various professions with the ability for further advancement.

- Once we provide insurance coverage to all Americans, we must be able to meet the demands of the patients. Patients will not be able to access appropriate care unless we increase the number of providers. The projected shortage of nurses and other health care professionals has been well documented, and will require a substantial investment in order to restore the pipeline of practitioners that are necessary to provide timely, convenient and effective care.

Mechanisms for Achieving these Goals

Health care reform will be an enormous task, and the American Academy of Nursing urges the incoming administration to examine all the various legislative and regulatory tools to implement these changes as swiftly as possible.

Any Budgetary or Appropriations Concerns or Impact

Providing access and coverage to all Americans will be a costly—but important—endeavor. There will also have to be a significant investment in Title VII and Title VIII funding in order to ensure there are enough health care providers to meet our nation's demands.

There will be significant upfront costs to reform health care delivery. But if it is done correctly and thoughtfully, it could result in a more efficient system that ultimately stabilizes or reduces costs.

Any other HHS issues

- The AAN urges the incoming administration to restore funding to the many agencies and institutions – such as the Health Resources and Services Administration, National Institutes of Health, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – that are under the Department of Health and Human Services and have been significantly underfunded for the past eight years.
- The AAN also believes that independence needs to be restored to the Office of Women's Health.
- The AAN would also like to see more nurse appointments in executive career and political positions, various advisory committees and panels and other stakeholder groups that the administration creates.