Priorities for Nursing’s Future
Recommendations from the Nursing Community
Prepared for the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

The Nursing Community is a forum for national professional nursing associations to build consensus and advocate on a wide spectrum of healthcare and nursing issues, including practice, education, and research. The Nursing Community is committed to improving the health and health care of our nation by collaborating to support the education and practice of Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs).

The Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s report on the Future of the Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health directly addresses the concerns facing the nursing profession’s ability to offer affordable, accessible, high quality health care. The report focuses on four key messages including:

1. Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
2. Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
3. Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other healthcare professionals, in redesigning healthcare in the United States.
4. Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

The report’s key messages take into consideration the projected and substantial demand for care with 32 million Americans entering the healthcare delivery system in the near future. Without question, the healthcare workforce must grow to meet the demand and ensure the system offers quality care that is affordable and accessible. RNs and APRNs have the education and training to meet many of these demands as leaders as well as integral members of the healthcare team.

The report also provides recommendations to achieve these key messages, which are specifically targeted to Congress, federal and state agencies/governments, and other stakeholders. The Nursing Community supports the IOM’s key messages and believes federal agencies such as OMB can play an integral role in advancing these goals where appropriate. There are a number of federal programs currently authorized and appropriated that with additional funding can help achieve the IOM goals for nursing’s future and improve the nation’s health. These programs are listed below under each key message. This list is not comprehensive but highlights successful programs that require a continued, increased, and sustained investment from the federal government. Additionally, we have included programs authorized through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), that if funded, would help meet these goals. As you finalize your FY 2012 budget request, we respectfully urge you to continue to prioritize a strong healthcare workforce that reflects the nation’s urgent healthcare needs.
IOM Key Messages

**Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.**
At the heart of this key message is ensuring patients have access to quality care by providers who have the education and training to meet the demand for healthcare services. These programs help prepare a robust workforce of APRNs and nurses with advanced specialty education to care for our nation’s most vulnerable populations.

**Existing Programs**
- Advanced Nursing Education Traineeships, Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships (Sec. 811, Nursing Workforce Development programs, Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [PHSA], (42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.)
- National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment program and National Health Service Corps Scholarship program (Title 42, PHSA)

**ACA Provisions**
- Nurse Managed Health Centers (Sec. 5208, ACA)

**Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.**
Many of the Title VIII programs support academic progression such as career ladder and bridge programs where nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, and associate degrees nurses can obtain baccalaureate and graduate education. Additionally, the Title VIII programs help prepare a culturally and ethnically diverse nursing workforce to better meet the needs of the US population. These programs, as well as those that support graduate education, will help achieve this goal so that the nursing profession has the RNs, faculty, researchers, APRNs, and nurses with advanced specialty education to meet America’s healthcare needs.

**Existing Programs**
- Advanced Nursing Education Grants (Sec. 811, Title VIII, PHSA)
- Nurse Faculty Loan Program (Sec. 846A, Title VIII, PHSA)
- Nurse Loan Repayment and Scholarship Programs (Sec. 846, Title VIII, PHSA)
- Career Ladder Programs including the Workforce Diversity Grants (Sec. 821, Title VIII, PHSA) and Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants (Sec. 831(c-retention priorities), Title VIII, PHSA)
- Nurse Residency Programs, specifically the Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants (Sec. 831(a-education priorities), Title VIII, PHSA)
- Comprehensive Geriatric Grants (Sec. 855, Title VIII, PHSA)
- Research Training Grants, National Institute of Nursing Research (Sec. 301, Title IV, PHSA)

**ACA Provisions**
- U.S. Public Health Sciences Track (Sec. 5315, ACA)

**Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other healthcare professionals, in redesigning healthcare in the United States.**
A healthcare system that is patient-centered must focus on team-based care, in which the science, philosophy of care, and skills of all providers are valued and understood to be integral in quality care delivery. To help achieve this IOM objective, the programs below prepare providers through a team-based approach and provide new emphasis from ACA that highlights the roles of quality measures and data collection in achieving these objectives.
Existing Programs
- Interdisciplinary, Community-Based Linkages (Title VII, PHSA)
- Minority and Disadvantaged Health Professions (Title VII, PHSA) including: Centers of Excellence, Health Careers Opportunity Program, faculty loan repayment and fellowships, and Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students.

ACA Provisions
- Quality Measure Development (Sec. 3013, ACA)
- Data Collection (Sec. 3015, ACA)

Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.
Workforce planning is essential to preparing enough providers to meet America’s healthcare needs. The programs listed below help achieve this goal.

Existing Programs
- National Center for Workforce Analysis (Sec. 761, Title VII, PHSA)

ACA Provisions
- The National Healthcare Workforce Commission (Sec. 5101, ACA)

Finally, the Nursing Community supports a number of priorities created through ACA that will improve the quality of healthcare delivery while helping to achieve the goals of the IOM report. These provisions, when implemented, require language that is inclusive of all health care providers and recognize their unique contributions to healthcare delivery, particularly RNs and APRNs. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation is one entity that will benefit from testing nurse-led models, value-based nursing quality measures, and fully integrated healthcare teams. Moreover, where it is appropriate, APRNs should lead models such as the Medical Home and Accountable Care Organizations.

The successful implementation of the IOM report will also require attention to current and potential regulatory barriers. The ACA can help overcome some of these barriers by using the regulatory process to ensure that RNs and APRNs are utilized in demonstration programs, state-based exchanges, as well as other provisions. For example, the ACA includes a provider non-discrimination provision that would prevent health insurance plans from discriminating against providers based solely on licensure. The Nursing Community looks forward to working with the Secretary of Health and Human Services to implement this provision and others.

In conclusion, the Nursing Community understands the financial constraints facing the federal government, but believes the programs highlighted above provide an opportunity to help support the key messages of the landmark report the Future of the Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health and bolster the nursing workforce to meet the demands of health reform implementation.

This document has been supported by the following 42 national nursing organizations:

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
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