

September 2010

WNA NEWS

A few highlights of Wisconsin Nurses Association Board of Directors August 20, 2010 Meeting

- **WNA dues increase of 1.2% effective January 1, 2011 approved. Increased by \$5.45 for Full Membership.**
- **Renamed the Excellence in Nursing Research Award be to the Norma Lang Excellence in Nursing Research Award.**
- **Transitioning from a District to Region Model of membership approved.**

WNC (Wisconsin Nurse Coalition) did not meet this summer.

HOT ISSUES in Legislation

1. **Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act Bill # H.R. 4993/S 2814. The bill would allow PA's, NP's, CNS's, and certified nurse midwives to order home health services under Medicare in accordance with state law. Medicare has recognized the independent practice of APRN's for nearly two decades and these health care professionals now provide the majority of care to home health patients. Unfortunately, a quirk in Medicare law has kept APRNs from signing home health plans of care and from certifying Medicare patients for the home health benefit. In areas where access to physicians is limited, this prohibition has led to delays in health care delivery. These delays in care inconvenience patients and their families. Additionally, delays can lead to increased cost to the Medicare system when patients are unnecessarily left in more expensive institutional settings.**
2. **Safe Chemicals bill introduced in the House, Toxic Chemicals Safety Act (H.R. 5820)— (S. 3209) Bill # 5820 would make much-needed changes to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), such as requiring publicly available safety and health data on chemicals, and putting the burden on the industry to prove that chemicals are safe in order stay on the market. Consumers may be choosing baby bottles made without bisphenol a (BPA), or perhaps looking for cosmetics that are "paraben-free," but these are just the chemicals we know about-- the ones that are in the news. What about all the others that haven't made the headlines? Because of the many chemicals nurses and other health care workers are exposed to in the workplace, they are at even higher risk. These chemicals are all associated with chronic illness and physical disorders. The long-awaited, landmark legislation would overhaul the way the federal government protects the public from toxic chemicals. We need to help to fight for swift, meaningful TSCA reform that will reduce our exposure to toxic chemicals, protect nurses and other workers, improve the health of Americans, and decrease cost of health care.**

3. **Safe Staffing legislation was introduced in the House and Senate. The Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act (H.R. 5527/S. 3491), which would hold hospitals accountable for the development of valid, reliable unit-by-unit nurse staffing plans. These plans would be developed in coordination with direct care registered nurses (RNs) and based on each unit's unique characteristics and needs. ANA needs your help to educate members of Congress and build support for this important legislation.**

4. **A Safe Patient Handling (SPH) program decreases injury to nurses, other health care workers and patients, while reducing work-related health care costs and improving the safety of patient care delivery\$50 million will be available to home health agencies or entities. Bill H.R. 2381 /S.1788**

All of the above issues need your attention. Please take the time to make you voice heard. Check out the following site for more information.

http://www.rnaction.org/site/PageServer?pagename=nstat_homepage&autologin=true

Make a phone call, visit a member of congress. Your voice can make a difference.

WNA Annual Meeting and Conference is October 7-9, 2010. Madison WI

WINTER WISPAN Conference is January 29, 2011 in Madison, WI

Submitted by Marlene Nahavandi RN BSN CAPA