

WOCN Government Relations Strategic Activities January/February, 2008

The WOCN Washington, DC office (Bryan Cave Strategies) remains at a very high level of activity during the first month and a half of 2008 and the Second Session of the 110th Session of Congress. The Society's activities have led to greater visibility for the organization on Capitol Hill and within the broader nursing community.

During the first six weeks of 2008, WOCN government relations staff/lobbyists in Washington, DC have been engaged in the following targeted activities:

- * WOCN met with the nursing community Wash, DC representatives and Capitol Hill leaders to discuss the reauthorization of the Nurse Reinvestment Act in 2008. During the meeting Senator Barbara Mikulski's, D-MD, office confirmed that the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee plans to reauthorize the Nurse Reinvestment Act this year. Mikulski's staff requested that the nursing community put together a single document detailing re-authorization priorities.
 - WOCN hosted the first Wash, DC meeting of a series of three gatherings (Bryan Cave Strategies offices in Wash, DC) with the nursing community ad hoc Task Force to develop a draft document outlining the community's priorities for Senator Mikulski and the Senate HELP committee to consider in the development of the Nurse Reinvestment Act.

The task force members attending the first meeting at WOCN's DC offices included:

NONPF	AANA
AWHONN	AONE
WOCN	ARN
NLN	ENA
NACNS	AACN
ANA	

* WOCN Endorses Joint Nursing Community Proposed Request for \$200 million to Fund Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in 2009.

WOCN Washington, DC representatives met with the broader nursing community to discuss, identify and support a funding level request of \$200 Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs in 2009. The community's request will be communicated in a joint letter to the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate.

* WOCN Participated in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) audio conference/Q&A session regarding Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) supplier accreditation. The audio conference was the first in a series of four designed to provide guidance to DMEPOS suppliers regarding accreditation. The discussion focused on compliance issues with the DMEPOS Quality Standards and the accreditation process.

* Society Joins and Endorses the Coalition for Healthcare's letter to Congress outlining healthcare funding needs/priorities for the 2009 federal appropriations cycle:

"February 14, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

Our nation struggles with escalating health care costs, growing numbers of uninsured, and the prospect of declining health measured by overall morbidity and mortality. The President's budget for FY 2009 continues to seriously underfund and undermine an important part of the solution: public health activities and programs. The investment in disease prevention and health promotion programs for all Americans needs to increase not decrease!

The undersigned organizations urge you to increase funding for all aspects of public health included in the Function 550/discretionary budget allocation in Fiscal Year 2009 by an amount that will: 1) restore funding cuts to public health programs enacted in FY 2006; 2) restore lost purchasing power that flat-funding for at least five years has eroded and 3) provide investments that begin to truly meet health challenges facing the nation.

It is estimated that an additional \$5.3 billion will be needed in FY 2009 to meet this goal.

These challenges include:

- Biomedical and Behavioral Research: Maintaining a vigorous portfolio of investigator-initiated basic research and pivotal translational and clinical studies to address the myriad health challenges that confront the American people and to develop a stable pool of talented new investigators whose ideas and fresh perspectives are vital to invigorating the research enterprise.
- Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: Improving community-based prevention and early intervention activities that address costly chronic diseases, infectious diseases, including those that are becoming increasingly drug-resistant, strengthening public health capacity and ensuring those with disabilities reach their highest potential in function and health.
- Access to Safety Net Health Care Services: Assuring access to basic and targeted health care services for the growing numbers of Americans who lack health insurance.
- Health Professions Education: Assuring that there is a well-trained, diverse health and public health workforce to serve as the foundation for the nation's health care system.
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse: Assuring access to needed mental health and substance abuse services for hundreds of thousands who must wait months for care, including Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan; reducing the 15-20 year lag from bench to bedside of promising new treatments.
- Health Services Research: Building the evidence needed to ensure patients get the right care at the right time, every time; providing decision makers with information that will help control unsustainable costs.
- Health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives: Reversing current health disparities for this population that now suffers a life expectancy that is four years lower than the general population.
- Food and Drug Safety: Assuring the nation has a safe food supply and a safe and effective supply of drugs and medical devices.

Our recommendation does not include, but rather is over and above, emergency funding requests."

* WOCN President to Attend Political Events and Spend Day on Capitol Hill Meeting With Targeted Congressional Offices to Advance the Society's Public Policy Agenda.

In February, WOCN's President will travel to Capitol Hill to meet with Members of the:

- * House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Committee,
- * House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health,
- * Senate Finance Committee, and
- * House and Senate HHS Appropriations Subcommittees.

These Congressional Committees have jurisdiction over Medicare, Medicaid and the annual federal funding of nursing programs.

* WOCN NIWI Participants to Meet with Capitol Hill Leaders in March. The Society's President and Government Relations Chairwoman will travel to Capitol Hill during the annual NIWI Capitol Hill Day. Targeted meetings are being scheduled WOCN's leadership delegation. The Society's NIWI participants will be invited to join WOCN's President and GR Committee Chairwoman for senior level meetings with Members of Congress, key Capitol Hill staff, and CMS officials.

* WOCN's Washington, DC office (Bryan Cave Strategies) has also represented the Society at weekly political events on Capitol Hill with the Congressional Nursing Caucus and other Members supportive of the nursing community. The Society's DC-based staff has been discussing an upcoming Capitol Hill Staff Briefing "WOCN Nursing 101" and other initiatives to be implemented in 2008.

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