

American Nurses Association 2008 House of Delegates

Resolution

Healthy Food in Health Care

WHEREAS, in promoting wellness in individuals and communities, one essential component of a healthy lifestyle is a balanced, nutritious diet that incorporates a wide spectrum of healthy foods; and

WHEREAS, there is increasing concern in the United States that additives and contaminants being used in the production of food in this country and around the world are having adverse effects on humans and their health; and

WHEREAS, industrial agriculture contributes to environmental degradation, the loss of farmland and the decline of rural communities and it relies on the application of high levels of synthetic fertilizers and toxic pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, exposure to which can lead to elevated cancer risks and disruption of human reproductive, immune, endocrine and nervous systems; and

WHEREAS, ANA has recently published *Principles of Environmental Health for Nursing Practice* (2007), encouraging nurses to incorporate such principles into their practice; and

WHEREAS, the ANA House of Delegates (2004) has declared support for phasing-out the non-therapeutic use of medically important antibiotics as feed additives in livestock and poultry for “non-therapeutic” purposes and the use of fluoroquinolones in poultry; and

WHEREAS, there has been demonstrated harm to animals from the use of recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH or rBST) and scientific concern regarding other environmental health issues; and

WHEREAS, Consumer’s Union, the nation’s largest consumer advocacy group, has repeatedly asked the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to reconsider its approval of rBGH in milk production and most of the industrialized countries of the world including Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan and all the countries of the European Union have banned the use of rBGH in dairy production; and

WHEREAS, patients who, under the doctrines of informed consent and right-to-know are familiar with their rights and expect to be informed of the risks and/or benefits of a medication or treatment, should have a similar right to be made aware of the contents of food or food products, including residual amounts of antibiotics, hormones, or other drugs that may constitute a potential risk for harm to human health; and

WHEREAS, nurses and their employing health care systems can play an important leadership role in supporting healthy food systems by modeling and advocating for food that is healthier for their communities, as exemplified by the fact that over 100 hospitals already have signed a pledge to purchase more sustainably-raised food, and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association recognizes the urgency of transforming our food system to promote environmental sustainability, improve nutritional health, and ensure social justice; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association supports the development of national and state laws, regulations and policies that specifically reduce the use of rBGH or rBST in milk and dairy production in the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association shall work collaboratively with other nursing organizations and hospital and healthcare organizations to eliminate purchasing milk and dairy products for use in the health care industry that contain artificial hormones such as recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) and any other food containing inappropriate additives; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association shall educate nurses regarding the known and projected harmful effects of the use of food additives, rBGH, and other hormones and antibiotics in milk and dairy production and in agriculture; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association supports the public's right to know through support of appropriate food labeling, including country-of-origin and genetic modification and of nutritional information for food served in institutions, restaurants and fast food chains: and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association advocates for local, state, national and international laws, regulations and policies that will support local, sustainable agricultural and dairy production practices and reduce the presence of environmental contaminants and additives in all food; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association encourages health care institutions to institute food preference policies to purchase and serve nutritional foods grown according to organic or other methods that support and emphasize sustainable food purchasing, local food systems, renewable resources, ecological diversity, and fair labor practices; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association encourages nurses to serve as role models and educators by participating in and promoting nutritious foods from sustainable local food systems so as to improve eating habits, increase patient and public health, and support the long-term social, economic, and environmental well-being of workers, communities and global health; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association supports Federal legislation to create an efficient and coherent food safety regulatory system in the U.S.