



## ANA-PAC 2008 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:  
Hillary Rodham Clinton

Campaign Address:  
4420 North Fairfax Drive Arlington, VA 22203

Campaign Website:  
[www.hillaryclinton.com](http://www.hillaryclinton.com)



**Please attach a brief biography and any relevant campaign material. For each question, please share your positions as well as your accomplishments.**

1. The American Nurses Association holds a fundamental belief that health care is a basic human right and supports restructuring health care in order to provide access to affordable essential health care services to all residents of the United States, regardless of pre-existing conditions. ANA further believes that health care services should be reorganized to concentrate on community-based primary care and preventive care while also focusing on better control of rising health care costs. How do you plan to address the issue of providing adequate health care coverage for the uninsured and underinsured?
  - a) Describe what benefits and services you believe should be included in basic health care coverage.
  - b) Describe the mechanism you believe would best finance such coverage.
  - c) What is your position on coverage of mental health services?

**My American Health Choices Plan will provide quality, affordable health care to all Americans, including the 47 million who don't have coverage today. I believe we have a moral imperative to ensure that every American has quality health care. Since the first day of my campaign, I have spoken about the need to reduce costs, improve quality, and ensure affordable health care for all Americans. Working with Congress, I will make passing universal health care my top domestic priority.**

**My plan is based on the principles of shared responsibility and choice. If you have a plan you like, you keep it. For those with health insurance, my plan builds on the current system to give businesses and their employees more choices while lowering costs and improving quality. If you want to change plans or aren't currently covered, you can choose from the same plans available to Members of Congress or opt into a public plan option like Medicare. And my plan will create a premium affordability tax credit so that people will not have to pay an unreasonable proportion of their income on premiums. No American family will have to choose between sending their children to college and paying for health care.**

**A key component of my plan will be prevention, which will not only improve Americans' quality of life but also cut costs throughout our health care system. Under my plan, insurers participating in a federal health program, like Medicare or Medicaid, will have to cover prevention as a condition of doing business with the federal government. Insurers would encourage both individuals and providers to use prevention services by paying for benefits like cancer screenings and immunizations. We must do what we can to keep people healthy and out of hospitals where they would undergo complicated and costly treatments.**



**My plan will ensure that insurance companies cannot discriminate against people on the basis of age, race, gender, or other risk factors, like pre-existing conditions. Insurance companies will be required to continue to provide insurance to people who have paid their premiums and want to continue coverage. Under my plan, the days of insurance companies competing over how to exclude people from receiving the care they need will come to an end. It's just wrong that people pay for insurance and then insurance companies work to determine how not to cover people when they are sick.**

**I believe it is critical that those with mental health needs receive the care they deserve, which is why mental health services will be included in the plans offered under my American Health Choices Plan. I have been a champion of mental health parity since the 1990s. Earlier this year, I co-sponsored the Mental Health Parity Act of 2007, which would improve mental health treatment and would build on the mental health parity provided to federal employees during the Clinton Administration almost a decade ago.**

**My American Health Choices Plan will need an up-front federal investment of about \$110 billion. This investment will yield more affordable health care for American families, workers, and businesses, and make us more competitive in the process. However, this amount will be fully paid for, will not increase the deficit, and will not increase net taxes.**

**I will pay for just over half the cost of my American Health Choices Plan with savings from reducing Medicare overpayments to HMOs and other unnecessary federal spending, lowering the cost of prescription drugs, and modernizing the healthcare system. Just under half would be financed by letting the Bush income tax cuts for the wealthy expire.**

2. What policy initiatives would you propose to ensure that Americans receive safe, cost-effective, comprehensive, quality comprehensive health care services?

- a) What is your position on legislation or regulations that would require health care facilities to develop and implement systems that ensure appropriate and safe registered nurse staffing levels?

**I know that we must address the nursing shortage in this country and give nurses the training, education, and support they need to provide the care patients deserve. We need a comprehensive solution to deal with this problem; we currently face a shortfall of 118,000 nurses and if we don't take action now, by the year 2020, that might reach as many as one million. When I am President, I will ensure that we address this crisis.**

**We need appropriate nurse-to-patient ratios in order to improve patient care and working conditions for nurses. A 2002 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that for each additional patient over four in a registered nurse's workload, the risk of death increases by seven percent for surgical patients. In hospitals with eight patients per nurse, patients have a 31 percent greater risk of dying than those in hospitals with four patients per nurse. The study also showed a strong correlation between understaffing and dissatisfaction among nurses, many of whom end up leaving the profession.**



**I believe that we need a health-care system that empowers health-care professionals to give the best care and assists patients in making the best decisions for themselves. We also need to ensure that payers – governments and private payers – value, reward, and promote better health outcomes and lower costs. That is why I announced in August a plan to raise standards, support health care providers, educate patients, realign the reimbursement systems to reward quality, recruit and retain more nurses, and address the health disparities that continue to plague our system. I was also proud to champion provisions in the Nurse Reinvestment Act that provided significant resources to recruit and train nurses, and I introduced the Nursing Education and Quality of Health Care Act. I strongly support loan forgiveness for nurses who work in hard-to-staff areas, and I was proud to champion legislation that recently became law that allows student loan payments to be based on their income and forgives the balance on all loans after 10 years of public service.**

3. How would you seek to address the severe nursing shortage facing this country?

- a) What is your position on measures that address working conditions for registered nurses and the safety of their patients, such as legislation prohibiting the use of mandatory overtime as a staffing tool, and “whistleblower protections” that would support nurses’ right to speak without reprisal about activities, practices, or conditions that threaten the health and safety of their patients or the environment?
- b) What measures would you support to encourage more people to enter and stay in the field of nursing? What level of federal funding would you provide for Title VIII programs and the Nurse Reinvestment Act to ensure sufficient numbers of qualified nurses are available to provide a full range of nursing services in all geographic areas?

**According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, in 2005, American nursing programs turned away nearly 32,000 qualified bachelor’s and master’s degree applicants. They just didn’t have the slots. So when I am President, I will provide funding to nursing schools to allow them to admit and train more nurses and to recruit and retain more faculty. And I’ll give first priority to schools with a record of sending graduates to serve in underserved areas – including rural communities, inner cities, and low-income neighborhoods.**

**I’ll also work to recruit more nurses to the profession in the first place by reaching out to communities of color that are traditionally underrepresented in the field and by providing scholarships and loan forgiveness so we can have a more diverse nursing workforce.**

**But we know that the problem isn’t just about recruiting nurses – it’s also about retaining them. Roughly 50 percent of new nurses leave their jobs within the first year, all too often because they’re not getting the support they need to do their jobs. I will address that by funding innovative mentoring and residency programs with proven track records of keeping nurses in the profession.**



**I have a history of working for America's nurses. I introduced the Nursing Education and Quality of Health Care Act, which would increase the nurse workforce in rural areas, expand nursing school faculty, and develop initiatives to integrate patient safety practices into nursing education. I am also a co-sponsor of legislation to restrict mandatory overtime for nurses and protect them from retaliation if they refuse to work overtime. And I authored a provision, which became law as part of the Nurse Reinvestment Act, that encourages the recruitment and retention of nurses and directs money to grants for nursing education and recruitment.**

4. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) play a crucial role in providing health care services in our nation's most underserved areas. These nurses typically hold degrees at the highest levels of education and receive advanced training in specialty areas of practice (i.e. Nurse Practitioners, Certified Nurse Midwives, and Clinical Nurse Specialists, among others). Despite the resolution of many practice and reimbursement issues, APRNs still experience discrimination and barriers to practice in our health care system. What is your position on the full utilization of APRNs?
  - a) Given that APRNs typically serve underserved communities, what is your position regarding APRNs as primary care providers in community settings?

**We need more advanced practice registered nurses, and they have to be given the additional authority to make decisions to ensure that people will not go without primary care. We're going to have to change the practice, acts, and protocols that govern what nurses can do – nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, physician's assistants, advanced practice professionals. It's clear that we will not be able to reach our goals for preventive and coordinated care if we don't have better utilization of nurses.**

5. On-the-job injuries caused by the strain of lifting and repositioning patients cause 12% of nurses to leave the profession annually. The average nurse working an 8 hour shift is currently required to lift 1.8 tons. If elected, how would you require health care facilities to invest in safe patient lifting technology to reduce the risk of workplace injuries to nurses?

**I believe it is important that all American employees are safe and protected where they work. In particular, I believe that we need to consider the effects of ergonomic hazards in order to quickly and effectively address musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace. I know that this is a problem for nurses, who often suffer from back-related injuries as a result of having to move and lift patients. The OSHA ergonomics standard was a regulatory priority during my husband's administration and the final regulation took effect in November 2000; the rule would have protected 27 million workers at 1.9 million workplaces from repetitive motion injuries and illnesses. In 2001, President Bush repealed it. I have co-sponsored legislation to enact this regulation into law and when I am President, I will work to restore this very important regulation that would improve the health and quality of life for America's workers, including the nurses who play a very critical role in our society.**



6. The Centers for Disease Control has confirmed the presence of hundreds of potentially harmful chemicals in the blood, urine, and breast milk of the U.S. population. Even more, toxic chemicals have also been detected in umbilical cord blood, indicating the ability of these chemicals to cross the placenta and reach the fetus. The incidence of diseases thought to have an environmental component are on the rise: Asthma prevalence has doubled in ten years; autism has increased more than tenfold; 1 in 6 children are born with a developmental disability; and a woman's lifetime risk of breast cancer is now 1 in 7. What is your plan to create a healthy environment in order to reduce the rates of environmental causes of illness?

**As the chairwoman of the Superfund and Environmental Health subcommittee of the Environmental and Public Works Committee, I held the first-ever congressional hearing on environmental justice, bringing much-needed attention to the fact that certain environmental conditions cause health problems. This is often the case in low-income or underserved communities.**

**My record shows my dedication to this issue. As Senator, I introduced the Family Asthma Act, which would help children manage their asthma and improve our ability to identify and control the environmental factors that contribute to asthma attacks. I also fought for the passage of the Healthy, High Performance Schools Act of 2001, legislation that provides grants to help school districts make their buildings healthier and more energy efficient, and I introduced the Coordinated Environmental Health Network Act, which would connect chronic disease registries with information about pollutants in order to increase our understanding of the relationship between the two.**

**When I am President, I will establish a nationwide tracking network to help identify connections between disease and environment. And I will develop a response system to address public health threats.**



**Return to:**

**Carlos Jackson, Senior Political Action Specialist  
Department of Government Affairs  
American Nurses Association (ANA)  
8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492  
[www.anapoliticalpower.org](http://www.anapoliticalpower.org)  
Phone: (301) 628-5088  
Fax: (301) 628-5348  
[carlos.jackson@ana.org](mailto:carlos.jackson@ana.org)**