



Nurse Education Act Funding

Position

ANA urges Congress to appropriate at least \$175 million in FY 2004 funding for the Nurse Education Act (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act).

Background

The nursing workforce development programs administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration, commonly known as the Nurse Education Act (NEA), provide federal support for nurse workforce development. The NEA favors programs in institutions that train nurses for practice in medically underserved communities and nursing shortage areas. It is the primary source of funding for nursing education.

The NEA supports nursing education programs through the educational continuum - from entry-level preparation through graduate study. It contains the following four major grant programs:

- **Advanced Education Nursing:** Provides grants to nursing schools, academic health centers, and other entities to enhance education and practice for nurses in master's and post-master's programs. These programs prepare nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, nurse midwives, nurse anesthetists, nurse educators, nurse administrators and public health nurses.
- **Workforce Diversity Grants:** Provides grants to increase opportunities for individuals who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, including students from economically disadvantaged families as well as racial and ethnic minorities underrepresented in the nursing profession. This authorizes HRSA to provide student scholarships or stipends, pre-entry preparation and retention activities.
- **Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants:** This section, formerly known as Basic Nurse Education and Practice, includes support for schools and nurses at the associate and baccalaureate degree level. Grants are provided to schools of nursing, academic health centers, nursing centers, state and local governments and other public or private nonprofit entities.
- **Nurse Corp:** This section, formerly known as the Nurse Education Loan Repayment Program, repays 60 to 85 percent of nursing student loans in return for at least two years of practice in a facility designated to have a critical shortage of nurses. HRSA has opted to steer these nurses to disproportionate share hospitals, departments of public health, and nursing facilities.

Title VIII also contains new programs to encourage masters and doctoral nursing students to serve as nursing faculty, as well as funding to support geriatric nurse education. The NEA programs were last reauthorized in 1998. They were modified and expanded by the Nurse Reinvestment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-205).

Rationale

In order to meet the growing demand for nursing services, the programs of the NEA must be given sufficient funding to: attract more students into nursing programs; support schools of nursing to provide faculty and updated curricula; recruit a more diverse student population; provide assistance to students to enable them to complete nursing studies, and; ensure the collection and analysis of current nursing workforce data to guide the appropriate implementation of these programs.