

American Nurses Association
8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3492
Tel (301) 628-5000
Fax (301) 628-5001
www.NursingWorld.org

NEWS RELEASE



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CONTACT:

Adam Sachs, 301-628-5034
adam.sachs@ana.org
Mary McNamara, 301-628-5198
mary.mcnamara@ana.org
www.nursingworld.org

ANA Backs New Report Describing Effects of Coal Pollution on Health

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA) joined other health care groups today to support the Physicians for Social Responsibility’s (PSR) newly-released report, “Coal’s Assault on Human Health.” Registered nurses see the effects of coal-generated pollution on the health of newborns who have elevated mercury levels and on patients with lung or cardiac disease.

The PSR report concludes that coal contributes to four of the top five causes of mortality in the U.S. -- heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic lower respiratory diseases – and is linked to increased incidences of major diseases. The report recommends establishing a national energy policy that puts greater emphasis on human health and replaces dependence on coal with clean, safe alternatives.

ANA General Counsel Alice Bodley appeared with representatives from the American Lung Association and PSR at a Washington, D.C. press conference today to present the findings of the report, which examines the devastating impacts of coal on major organ systems.

The report “makes it clear that the time has come to reverse the toxic effects of coal on the health of our patients,” Bodley told reporters. “As all of us have grappled with modifications to the health care delivery system, the country has recognized something that nurses have always known – that health care must have, as a key component, the prevention of disease. Our health care system is burdened by preventable illnesses arising from the reliance of the United States on coal.”

MORE . . .

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ANA has a long history of addressing health effects attributable to environmental causes, such as health problems caused by mercury. ANA recently joined health and environmental groups in a successful legal action to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to enforce tighter pollution control standards on coal-fired power plants.

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its constituent member nurses associations, its organizational affiliates, and its workforce advocacy affiliate, the Center for American Nurses. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.