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**NEWS RELEASE**



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**ANA Eager for Debate on Healthcare Reform Bill Introduced in Senate**  
*Nurses Stand Ready to Play Major Role in Reform Proposals*

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – The American Nurses Association (ANA) eagerly awaits the imminent debate prompted by the Affordable Health Choices Act, introduced in the U.S. Senate today by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA). ANA views the bill as a critical first step toward ANA’s goal of ensuring guaranteed, affordable, high-quality health care for all.

As a longtime advocate for the interests of the nation’s 2.9 million nurses and their patients, ANA is encouraged by the legislation’s provisions for a public health insurance plan option to ensure greater access, choice and affordability.

“The American Nurses Association believes that a public health insurance plan option is an essential component of any reform plan moving forward,” said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR, of the bill sponsored by Kennedy, chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. “ANA’s core belief is that health care is a basic human right. We are encouraged to see that this proposal is on the right track promoting universal health coverage, expanding coverage options, containing costs and improving quality.”

ANA believes that meaningful health care reform must include the efficient deployment and utilization of the nursing workforce to expand access to services, improve quality of care, enhance patient safety and increase value in the nation’s healthcare delivery system. As foot-soldiers of the healthcare system, working directly with patients, nurses must be able to provide services to the full extent allowed under federal and state nursing laws and regulations.

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For example, the full and efficient utilization of the nursing workforce is necessary to bolster the shortage of healthcare professionals providing primary care services. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) are educated and licensed in many states to provide primary care services. However, APRNs currently are not being utilized in that capacity to the full extent possible.

ANA is encouraged by the bill's emphasis on improving prevention and wellness services and coordination of care for patients with chronic conditions, all of which are core to nursing's philosophy of care.

"The concepts outlined in this bill are well-suited to the type of work nurses are educated to do and perform every day," ANA President Patton said. "We are confident that nurses not only would help make these types of reform ideas work, but would add value to patients through quality improvements and to the overall health system through cost reductions."

ANA plans to continue its work with the Senate to provide information on how nurses can best contribute toward achieving broad healthcare goals and improvements as reflected in the Senate bill.

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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 51 constituent member nurses associations and its 24 specialty nursing and workforce advocacy affiliate organizations that currently connect to ANA as affiliates. 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.*