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NEWS RELEASE



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ANA ADVOCATES FOR CHEMICAL REFORM DURING CAPITOL HILL NURSES WEEK EVENT

Silver Spring, MD – In honor of National Nurses Week, the American Nurses Association (ANA), the nation’s largest nursing organization, headed to Capitol Hill. In conjunction with the Congressional Nursing Caucus, ANA sponsored a luncheon briefing on Tuesday, May 11th at 12:00 p.m. to highlight for Congressional staff the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) reform that will reduce our nation’s exposure to toxic chemicals, protect nurses and other workers, improve the health of Americans, and decrease the cost of health care.

ANA sponsored the briefing to highlight the nursing profession’s concerns over chemical exposure and its impact on health care professionals and the patients we serve. “In keeping with this year’s National Nurses Week theme, *Nurses: Caring Today for a Healthier Tomorrow*, ANA came to Capitol Hill to educate lawmakers about the potential health risks of chemical exposures and the need for real environmental reform. ANA has been a leader in the formation of public policy that affects human health, and as nurses, will continue to advocate for laws that counteract potential threats to human health,” said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR.

Nurses, as the largest group of health care providers, recognize the serious impact chemical exposure has on the public’s health. Studies continue to demonstrate a link between chemical exposure and serious illnesses, including cancer, reproductive and developmental disorders, neurological diseases and asthma. Exposure in the workplace puts nurses and other health care professionals at an even greater risk. To illustrate the dangers of chemical exposure, ANA, in **MORE...**

partnership with Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), took part in a first of its kind biomonitoring study of physicians and nurses in October 2009. The findings showed each study participant had at least 24 individual chemicals present in their systems, four of which are on the recently released EPA list of priority chemicals for regulation. These chemicals are all associated with chronic illness and physical disorders.

Among the speakers at Tuesday's event was Donna Yancey, RN, BSN, CRRN, a retired nurse and one of the biomonitoring study participants. Other speakers included Nancy Hughes, MS, RN, and director of ANA's Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, Andy Igrejas, campaign director for Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, and Joyce Martin, the director of Environmental Health Policy for the American Association on Individual and Developmental Disabilities.

National Nurses Week, first founded by ANA, focuses on giving thanks, recognition and acknowledgement for all nurses do for patients. Today's nurses must have the strength to care for patients during times of disaster and crisis, and the compassion to provide hands-on patient care at the bedside – as they have done throughout the centuries. Moreover, at 3.1 million strong, nurses represent the largest group of health care workers in America, and have the power to achieve much-needed reform in health care and in nursing.

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 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.