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**NEWS RELEASE**



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**ANA ANNOUNCES FORMAL RECOGNITION OF  
WOUND, OSTOMY AND CONTINENCE SPECIALTY NURSING PRACTICE**

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – The American Nurses Association (ANA), the largest nursing organization in the U.S., announces the formal recognition of wound, ostomy and continence (WOC) nursing as a specialty.

WOC nursing is an evidence-based practice designed to improve the quality of life for persons with select disorders of the gastrointestinal, genitourinary (reproductive and urinary), and integumentary (skin and associated structure) systems.

“ANA is pleased to recognize the specialty status of this essential area of nursing practice,” remarked ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, RN, MSN, CNOR. “ANA plays a vital leadership role in protecting the public by assuring quality in the clinical, administrative, education, and research domains of nursing practice. We set the bar high by establishing rigorous standards for the achievement of specialty status. Granting this specialty recognition underscores the importance of wound, ostomy, and continence nursing practice to patients, and the dedication of practitioners and professional organizations to assuring ongoing excellence and patient safety in this area of nursing practice. It is a very significant achievement.”

Kathleen Lawrence, RN, MSN, President-Elect of the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Society (WOCN) – which represents more than 4,200 health care professionals who are experts in the care of patients with wound, ostomy and incontinence – says the formal recognition is an important milestone for the specialty. "The Wound Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society believes that the ANA recognition of our specialty, scope and standards is invaluable. The ANA process guided the documentation of the profession's valuable history, our current achievements, and the depth and breadth of our professional practice. We know this will be an important document and a vital resource for our members."

During the late 1990s, the ANA convened representatives from various specialty nursing groups to address the need for consistency in standards of practice and to identify a formal mechanism to confirm professional recognition of specialty practice based on 14 designated criteria for specialty recognition. This resulted in the ANA, via its Congress on Nursing Practice and Economics, becoming the neutral reviewing body of specialty nursing scope of practice statements and standards of practice.

In recent years, several nursing specialties have completed the multi-level ANA review process and received formal recognition. They are: Plastic Surgery Nursing and Vascular Nursing in 2004; Nephrology Nursing in 2005; and Legal Nurse Consulting, HIV/AIDS Nursing, and Holistic Nursing in 2006.

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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.*

*Founded in 1968, the Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nurses Society (WOCN) is a professional, international nursing society of more than 4,200 healthcare professionals who are experts in the care of patients with wound, ostomy and incontinence. The WOCN Society supports its members by promoting educational, clinical and research opportunities to advance the practice and guide the delivery of expert health care to individuals with wounds, ostomies and incontinence.*

*The Congress on Nursing Practice and Economics (CNPE) is an organized, deliberative body which brings together the diverse experiences and perspectives of ANA members. The Congress focuses on establishing nursing's approach to emerging trends within the socioeconomic, political and practice spheres of the health care industry by identifying issues and recommending policy alternatives to the Board of Directors. The CNPE is responsible for revising ANA's foundational documents, and for the creation and revision of Position Statements relating to issues of strong importance to the organization and the nursing community at large.*

