ANA Supports Bill to Improve Health Care Access for Medicaid Patients

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA) is urging support for the 
Medicaid Advanced Practice Nurses and Physician Assistants Access Act (H.R. 2134/S. 56),
which would promote greater access to quality primary health care for lower-income individuals,
especially in provider shortage areas, by recognizing advanced practice registered nurses
(APRNs) and physician assistants as qualified providers.

H.R. 2134/S. 56 would remove legal barriers that restrict APRNs from participating in the fee-
for-service Medicaid program, requiring states to acknowledge APRNs as primary care case
managers, and Medicaid managed care plans to include the services of APRNs. Currently, it is
optional for states to recognize APRNs as case managers, and for APRNs to be included in the
roster of providers by Medicaid managed care plans.

“APRNs increase patients’ access to primary and preventive health care, and as a result, the
number of hospital admissions and emergency care visits decrease," said ANA President Karen
A. Daley, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN. "By including the provisions of this act in Medicaid reform,
Congress would ensure that Medicaid patients receive care in a timely and cost-effective manner,
and they would help ease the shortage of health care professionals that rural and other
underserved areas struggle with — while also guaranteeing that APRNs receive adequate
reimbursement for the high-quality patient care they provide.”

MORE. . .
ANA has written to House and Senate members urging support of H.R. 2134/S. 56. Nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists and clinical nurse specialists have been disadvantaged by changes to Medicaid which have created obstacles to their participation in the program. These providers perform many of the same essential health care services as physicians. ANA strongly believes that this legislation will increase access to essential health care services while helping to control Medicaid spending.

"We must do everything we can to expand the availability of quality medical care," said U.S. Rep. John Olver (D-MA), the bill’s House sponsor. "This bill proposes to do just that. State Medicaid agencies choosing not to reimburse for the services of nurse practitioners and physician assistants just doesn't make sense. In areas with a shortage of physicians, such as rural and inner city communities, these medical professionals should be able to provide the quality health care that would otherwise be difficult for Medicaid beneficiaries to access."

Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) is the sponsor of the Senate companion bill, S. 56.

For information on developments related to Medicaid, visit ANA’s Medicaid website, www.rnaction.org/medicaid.

# # #

The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent and state nurses associations and its organizational 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.