

July 11, 2013

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Johnson:

I am contacting you on behalf of the American Nurses Association (ANA), the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses, to express our opposition to H.R. 485, The National Nurse Act of 2013.

ANA remains concerned about this well intentioned proposal and have heard from colleagues who have served in the U.S. Public Health Service that the redesignation of the Chief Nurse Officer (CNO), a well-established post within the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), to Office of the National Nurse would not effectively serve to boost the role of this federal leadership position. Furthermore, we understand that the CNO's duties already include several of those described in the proposed title of "National Nurse."

After careful review, ANA believes that several obligations outlined in the proposal of the National Nurse are duplicative in nature, such as collaborating with the Office of the Surgeon General and providing guidance and leadership for activities that will increase public safety and emergency preparedness. Therefore we believe the symbolic gesture of changing the CNO's title is not an effective means to increase the delivery of quality nursing services to the public.

Currently, the Chief Nurse Officer, USPHS, advises and supports the Surgeon General as well as senior leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on issues related to health promotion, disease prevention, and disaster preparedness. Additionally, the CNO is responsible for providing coordination of the Public Health Service (PHS) nursing professional affairs for the Office of the Surgeon General and HHS. The CNO guides the Nurse Professional Advisory Committee (N-PAC) and the nation's nursing community on matters such as prevention, primary care, health systems development, recruitment, retention, readiness and career development of PHS nurses.

We do not believe the proposal to change the title to "National Nurse" will help strengthen the position of the CNO, USPHS. Altering the title of the Chief Nurse Officer to National Nurse would dilute the authority this role currently assumes in the domestic and global political arena and in the eye of the public. The Nursing Community is fully committed to strengthening nursing's role in the public health sector, and to instilling the public's confidence in nursing leadership. At a time when the American public increasingly relies on the nursing profession to deliver high-quality, cost-effective preventative care, efforts should be directed toward illuminating continued effective nursing leadership roles, such as that of the CNO, USPHS.

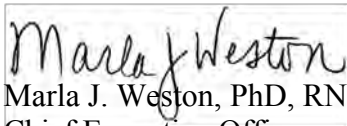
ANA believes that in a time of scarce federal dollars, increased support for public health nurses directly involved at the point of care delivery would better serve the nation's well-being.

Additionally, we support strengthening the CNO to a full-time position, as well as elevating the rank of the CNO to a Rear Admiral (Upper Half/08), thus promoting the CNO to equivalent ranks of the other uniformed services' Nurse Corps Chiefs. This would allow for a greater working capacity of the CNO to carry out the vital functions enacted on behalf of the nursing profession and our nation's public.

These efforts directly align with the Institute of Medicine's landmark report *Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health* recommendation to "prepare and enable nurses to lead change to advance health." More specifically, the report recommends that the nursing workforce be prepared to assume leadership positions across all levels and that governmental health care decision makers should ensure that leadership positions are available to and filled by nurses. The CNO serves to elevate nursing leadership within the federal policy making structure and ensures that nursing's expertise is incorporated at the forefront of public health initiatives.

ANA applauds your desire to address this complicated, sensitive issue; and we look forward to continuing to work with you to advance nursing and health care issues during the 113th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marla J. Weston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Marla" is prominent, followed by "J." and "Weston".

Marla J. Weston, PhD, RN, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer

cc: President Karen Daley, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN