



March 18, 2010

Dear Colleague,

In October 2007 we wrote to express concern regarding the creation of an Office of the National Nurse for Prevention (ONNP). At that time our concerns focused on three general areas: the initiative's proposed creation of new programs that were redundant with existing personnel and systems (e.g., the U.S. Public Health Service Chief Nursing Officer, Public Health Nursing and the Medical Reserve Corps); limited resources to fund existing programs, and; the need to ensure that the proposal's public health education efforts advocated using proven, evidence-based interventions. While the ONNP proposal has been modified, we continue to have serious concerns regarding the proposal.

Of primary concern is the continued focus on legislation to change the title and expand the responsibilities of the existing Chief Nurse Officer (CNO) of the US Public Health Service (USPHS). The Chief Nurse Officer, USPHS, is part of an interdisciplinary team comprised of all the USPHS Chief Professional Officers, who advise and support not only the Surgeon General, but the senior leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services. Officially designating the CNO as the "National Nurse" would have potential negative consequences on the CNO and the rest of the interdisciplinary team; would prevent the CNO from spending the necessary time on managing the Nurse Category--the largest category in the USPHS; would adversely affect the CNO's time available to coordinate with the Federal Nursing Services Council (comprised of the CNO's of all the uniformed services, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Red Cross) and would create efforts that duplicate current initiatives.

We do not believe this proposal will help strengthen the position of the CNO, USPHS. We believe it has the potential to negatively affect the position and with it the relationships and networks, created and sustained over the years that are important to strengthening our public health infrastructure. Instead, we support strengthening the CNO position to full-time and firmly believe the rank of the CNO should be elevated to a Rear Admiral (Upper Half/08) to be equivalent to the ranks of the other uniformed services' Nurse Corps Chiefs, which the ONNP proponents agree. Above all, we admittedly support a stronger investment in the public health system and the nurses who provide essential services that prevent disease and increase overall health.

We are fully committed, both as organizations and individuals, to improving health on a daily basis, and to ensuring the security of our nation through a strong national public health system able to provide the basic health needs of its citizens and the public health emergency preparedness needs of our nation. Instead of creating a new title with

redundant, unfunded, and unstaffed requirements, we believe that more can be achieved through strengthening our existing public health infrastructure and resources.

We hope the continued attention to the nursing profession, the current nursing shortage, and nurses' vital role in public health will be discussed as critical elements of health care reform.

Signed,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American College of Nurse Practitioners
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
International Association of Forensic Nurses
National American Arab Nurses Association
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of School Nurses
National Nursing Staff Development Organization
National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Philippine Nurses Association of America, Inc.
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Public Health Nursing Section, American Public Health Association
RADM Julia R. Plotnick (ret), Former Chief Nurse Officer, US Public Health Service
RADM Mary Pat Couig (ret), MPH, RN, FAAN, Former Chief Nurse Officer, US Public Health Service
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
The Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations