

**American Nurses Association  
2004 House of Delegates**

**Resolution**

**Inappropriate Use of Antimicrobials in Agriculture**

**WHEREAS**, Overuse of antibiotics in agricultural is contributing to the emerging crisis of antibiotic resistance (Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics, 2002), which threatens the ability of nurses to treat patients for bacterial infections successfully and which may pose risks to the health of nurses and their families (Gewanter, 2002); and

**WHEREAS**, Nurses can play a critical role in educating the public and policymakers on the importance of maintaining the efficacy of antibiotics by reducing overuse of antibiotics in agriculture; and

**WHEREAS**, The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has identified antibiotic resistance as a “top concern,” and has stated that “Widespread use of antibiotics promotes the spread of antibiotic resistance” (U.S. Centers for Disease Control); and

**WHEREAS**, Antibiotics are extensively used in agriculture, primarily as feed additives for non-therapeutic purposes including growth promotion and routine prophylaxis, and many of these antibiotics are within classes also used in human medicine (Mellon, 2001); and

**WHEREAS**, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration proposed in October 2000 to withdraw the approval for therapeutic use in poultry of fluoroquinolones, a class of drugs that includes Ciprofloxacin, because of evidence that such use is contributing to the spread of fluoroquinolone-resistant *Campylobacter* in humans, thus increasing the difficulty of treating severe food-borne illness (Food and Drug Administration, 2000); and

**WHEREAS**, Bipartisan federal legislation that has been endorsed by numerous health-professional organizations would phase out use of medically important antibiotics as non-therapeutic feed additives unless FDA concludes that continued use does not contribute to antibiotic resistance affecting humans (Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act); and

**WHEREAS**, Few new antibiotics are now under development, and any new antibiotics that reach the market are likely to be more expensive, exacerbating problems of the affordability of health care (Infectious Diseases Society of America, 2003); therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the American Nurses Association urge Congress, meat and poultry producers, and bulk purchasers of meat to promptly phase out the non-therapeutic use of medically important antibiotics and the use of fluoroquinolones in poultry; and

**RESOLVED**, That the American Nurses Association educate registered nurses on the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics and fluoroquinolones by the meat and poultry producers and ways in which registered nurses can advocate for a change in this practice; and

**RESOLVED**, That the American Nurses Association support full disclosure by meat and poultry producers regarding the use of pharmaceuticals.