

American Nurses Association Talking Points (July 2010)
ANA's Health System Reform Agenda (2008)
Alignment With
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010

Background

The American Nurses Association first published *Nursing's Agenda for Health Care Reform*, endorsed by more than 60 nursing and other health care organizations, in 1991 to call for substantial changes in a fragmented health care system that showed glaring shortcomings in access, quality and cost controls.

As attempts to reform the health care system collapsed in the 1990s and costs continued escalating, ANA revised its reform agenda in 2005, this time recognizing the impact of cyclical nursing shortages on health care delivery. ANA's policy last was updated in 2008 with publication of *ANA's Health System Reform Agenda*, as more research demonstrated the relationship between nurse staffing and patient outcomes.

ANA's Health System Reform Agenda's Alignment With
The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010

- ANA believes health care is a **basic human right** that should be provided to all individuals. While PPACA does not go that far, the law does extend health coverage to millions who currently lack health insurance and protects many others from losing coverage due to common private health insurer cost-saving practices. The law encompasses all U.S. citizens and legal residents, but not undocumented immigrants.
- ANA believes that the health care system must ensure **access**, which means health care services must be **affordable, available** and **acceptable**. PPACA substantially addresses these goals:
 - **Affordability** – PPACA provides assistance on health insurance costs through subsidies and credits for individuals and families, varying based on income; and expansion of Medicaid for all people under age 65 whose income falls below 133% of the federal poverty level.
 - **Availability** – PPACA **prohibits insurer discrimination** based on factors such as health status, medical condition or history, claims experience, and genetic information or disability. It also prohibits insurance rating variability, which can affect health coverage costs, based on health or gender.
 - **Acceptability** – PPACA acknowledges different cultural approaches to health care through workforce provisions promoting cultural competence training of health care professionals and development of a diverse workforce. It fosters a stronger community-based health care

network through funding for Community Health Centers and the National Health Service Corps. It also establishes new programs to support school-based health centers and nurse-managed health centers.

- ANA believes that all individuals should have access to a **standard package of essential health care services**. Though PPACA falls short of guaranteed coverage to all individuals, it does create an essential benefits package incorporating a comprehensive set of services. The law requires health plans, including those in the individual and small group markets, to provide the standard package as a minimum policy.
- ANA believes the health care system must be redirected from the overuse of more expensive, technology-driven, hospital-based services to a more balanced approach with greater emphasis on **community-based care** and **preventive services**. PPACA steers the nation toward this goal through numerous initiatives designed to improve **care coordination, chronic disease management, disease prevention** and **health/wellness promotion**.
- ANA supports incorporating into health policy changes the six major aims identified by the Institute of Medicine – **safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient** and **equitable**. PPACA embodies those aims. For example:
 - **Safe** – PPACA requires group health insurers to report to HHS on quality improvement activities aimed at increasing patient safety and reducing medical errors through use of best clinical practices, evidence-based medicine and health information technology.
 - **Effective** – PPACA supports **comparative effectiveness research**, a method for evaluating how different treatment therapies for a certain health condition compare to each other.
 - **Patient-centered** – PPACA includes establishment of a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute.
 - **Efficient** – PPACA establishes the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to evaluate which innovative payment systems and health care delivery models can reduce costs and improve quality.

For more detail on how ANA's Health System Reform Agenda aligns with PPACA, please see:

<http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/HealthcareandPolicyIssues/HealthSystemReform/Agenda/Policy-and-Health-Reform-Law.aspx>