

Nurses Need to be Included in Health Care Debate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Green Bay, WI) While the health care debate continues in the United States, there's one voice you haven't heard much from: nurses. "While a number of our professional organizations have spoken up and even testified on Capitol Hill about proposed health care reform efforts, nurses have not been asked to the table as equal contributors and participants in the national health care debate," said T. Heather Herdman, PhD, RN, Executive Director of NANDA International (NANDA-I). NANDA-I is a professional nursing association that develops, refines and promotes terminology that accurately reflects nurses' clinical judgments.

"Nurses are the largest group of health care providers in the United States and throughout the world," Herdman stated. "There are 2.9 million practicing Registered Nurses who make up 55% of the U.S. health care workforce. We spend the most time with patients; with health care expertise that is independent of, and complementary to, that of physicians. It just makes sense to have nurses involved in a significant way in this public policy debate."

Professor Dickon Weir-Hughes, President of NANDA-I, believes that by leaving nurses out of the debate, one of the biggest health care issues facing this country is also being left out. That issue is Electronic Health Records – or EHRs. "Literally every other developed country in the world uses EHR because it improves the quality and safety of care," said Weir-Hughes. "Having standardized patient data, available and shared among the patient, clinical and administrative stakeholders whenever and wherever there is a need, is essential to improving the health care system as a whole."

While patient records span the continuum of care, they are not easily transportable between care providers. "In this country, we have moved toward patient-centered care, but our records keeping system has not kept up," added Dr. Herdman.

Another important part of the EHR discussion centers on using standardized nursing language (SNL), something government officials and lay people don't generally consider. SNL allows the nursing profession to clearly and unambiguously capture, quantify and track the hours nursing professionals spend on patient care assessment, planning and services "This information often gets lost in the daily room charges since nursing care is not reimbursed under the current system of healthcare reimbursement, yet this information is incredibly valuable from both a quality of care and a financial standpoint," added Weir-Hughes. "All of this should be part of the health care discussion. EHRs benefit patients and the health care system. "

NANDA-I is urging the President and Congressional leaders to bring more nurses into the conversation before hard and fast decisions are made. Herdman stated, “It would be a tragedy to enact legislation or policy without a significant contribution from the nursing profession.”

###

***NANDA International (NANDA-I)** is an organization of nursing professionals from more than 20 countries, that develops, refines and publishes terminology that accurately reflects nurses’ clinical judgments. NANDA-I’s unique, evidence-based standardized nursing language includes social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of care. It is used in 32 countries worldwide. To learn more, go to: www.nanda.org*

Media Contact:

Angela Walschinski

NANDA-I

Leonard & Finco Public Relations, Inc.

920-965-7750 ext. 119

awalschinski@LFpublicrelations.com

www.LFpublicrelations.com