

HPEC Newsletter



March 2011

AACC Welcomes a New Association Focused on Associate Degree Respiratory Therapy

The National Network of Associate Degree Respiratory Care (NN2RC) announced its incorporation this January 2011. As reported in previous [HPEC newsletters](#), Carolyn O'Daniel, dean of allied health and nursing of Jefferson Community and Technical College and the president of [National Network of Health Career Programs in Two-Year Colleges](#) (NN2), has kept in close contact with HPEC to provide updates about the formation of this new health career association. NN2RC's mission is to advocate for associate degree respiratory care education and practice. Its vision is to confirm the role of the associate degree for entry into respiratory care educational and career pathways.

In a February 15, 2011, interview with HPEC, O'Daniel commented on the creation of this new membership association. "We realized that there was a need for supporters of the associate degree level to have a genuine voice of their own," O'Daniel said. "At a roundtable discussion that NN2 convened during our annual conference in October, it became clear that supporters of associate degree education wanted to have a voice. The 60 or so people who showed up for that discussion identified a need for a new professional organization that could be counted on to effectively represent associate degree level respiratory care education. Since then, a subcommittee of NN2's Advocacy Committee has taken that roundtable group's charge and has been making it happen."

NN2RC also has identified its initial roster of officers. Tommy Rust (MEd, RRT, FAARC) is NN2RC's interim president. He resides in Texas and works out of Kansas. Rust is a former vice president of the American Association for Respiratory Care and currently serves as the national director for respiratory therapy at Concorde Career Colleges. Peggy James (MBA, RRT-CPFT) serves as the new organization's interim secretary. She is the program director of respiratory care at Ivy Tech Community College (IN). Marcia Fuller (MAE, RRT) is the interim treasurer for NN2RC and is the program director at Bowling Green Technical College in Kentucky. These individuals have stepped forward to volunteer their time to grow this new association.

Other volunteers who have provided solid leadership for this emerging organization include Jackie Long-Goding, dean of health professions, Northern Essex Community College (MA); Lacheeta McPherson, executive dean, health and legal studies, El Centro College (TX); Sondra Flemming, vice president, health and economic development, El Centro College; Yvonne George, respiratory care clinical preceptor, Cuyahoga Community College (OH); and Stacey Ocander, dean of health and public services, Metropolitan Community College (NE).

HPEC has learned that the first conference and convening organizational meeting is being planned for June 15–17, 2011, in Kansas City, Missouri. Membership information will be included in the meeting registration. HPEC will be communicating additional details of these meetings, so watch the [HPEC website](#) and newsletter for more information. Currently, NN2RC's website is under construction. The Web address will be www.NN2RC.org. Soon after the launch of the NN2RC website, a membership form will be posted.

The establishment of NN2RC is well-timed and welcomed by HPEC. To read more about the movement to appropriately advocate and support the entry-level degree for respiratory therapy, go to the HPEC December 2010 newsletter article, "[Update on Push to Inflate Respiratory Therapy Education](#)."

President Obama's FY 2012 Federal Budget Includes Investment in Allied Health and Nursing

In a backdrop of fiscally conservative views, President Barack Obama released his [FY 2012 Budget Request](#) for federal programs. This budget blueprint generally seeks to freeze overall domestic discretionary spending for the next 5 years at the FY 2010 levels. In a press release accompanying the FY 2012 spending proposal, the administration stated that the president's budget is "a plan to rebuild our economy and win the future by out-innovating, out-educating, and out-building our global competitors and creating the jobs and industries of tomorrow."

The president's request for funding of the Public Health Service Act's Title VII Health Professions programs and Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs are of the greatest interest to community colleges. These program are administered by the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA), the principal federal agency charged with increasing access to basic health care for those who are medically underserved. HRSA's budget justification [FY 2012 goal](#) is to strengthen the health-care workforce to "improve health care systems by assuring access to a quality health care workforce in all geographic areas and to all segments of the population through the support of training, recruitment, placement, and retention activities." The following summarizes several proposed budget line items of special interest to community college nursing programs:

Interdisciplinary, Community-Based Linkages Programs (Title VII):

- Funding for Allied Health and Other Disciplines was zeroed-out, which also has been the case in previous presidential budget proposals. However, Area Health Education Centers, in which some allied health professionals practice, received a 4.5% increase over the FY 2010 level to a

recommended \$34.833 million, and the Geriatric Programs line item was increased by 29.6% to \$43.747 million.

Health Professions Training for Diversity (Title VII):

- The Health Careers Opportunity Program and Centers of Excellence received proposed FY 2012 spending equal to FY 2010 funding at \$22.133 million and at \$24.602 million, respectively. The Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program came in at \$60 million, which is 21.6% over the FY 2010 spending level.

Nursing Workforce Development (Title VIII):

- The president proposed a 28.4% increase over the FY 2010 level in these programs to \$313.075 million in FY 2012. Funding for the Nurse Education, Practice, and Retention Grants program, through which community colleges support career ladder programs, was increased by 49.8% to \$59.773 million, and the Workforce Diversity funding activity was boosted to \$20 million, a 24.2% rise. Funding for Comprehensive Geriatric Education Grants came in at \$5 million, which is 9.5% above FY 2010, and Nurse Faculty Loan Program Grants funding was proposed at \$30 million, 20% more than in FY 2010. Nurse Loan Repayment Program and Scholarship Programs funding stayed steady at the FY 2010 level of \$93.864 million.

Federal Prevention and Public Health Funding Announced

HPEC is closely following federal initiatives that may be leveraged by community colleges to support public health workforce education and certification programs. To this end, HPEC attended the February U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announcement of a [\\$750 million investment](#) in prevention and public health. The investment is part of the Prevention and Public Health Fund created by the 2010 health reform law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), to assist state and community efforts in preventing illness and promoting health, so that all Americans can lead longer, more productive lives. This investment-based research fund will help prevent disease, detect it early, and manage conditions before they become severe. By concentrating on the causes and management of chronic disease, this PPACA-funded investment helps move the nation from a focus on sickness and disease to one based on wellness and prevention.

The [fund's website](#) offers fact sheets, tools, and resources for local prevention and health initiatives. These materials also can be innovatively embedded in education lessons and used to aid community colleges in identifying potential sources of funding and partnership building for clinical site training. For example, the fund's Public Health Infrastructure grants are investments to strengthen state and local capacity in preparing health departments to meet 21st-century public health challenges, including supporting the education of existing and next generation public health professionals. These grants also fund state, local, and tribal public health infrastructure to improve health information technology.

The fund's Primary Care Training grants support the expansion of the primary care workforce. Clinical training sites eligible for funding under these grants include Nurse-Managed Health Clinics (NMHCs). Partnering with NMHCs provides students with unique opportunities to learn about delivery of primary

care and wellness services to underserved and vulnerable populations through facilities managed by advanced practice nurses.

The recently announced 2011 Prevention and Public Health Fund priorities emphasize the following four areas that could shape curricula and point to potential health-care partners:

1. Community Prevention (\$298 million) funds will be used to help promote health and wellness in local communities, including efforts to prevent and reduce tobacco use; improve nutrition and increase physical activity to prevent obesity; and coordinate and focus efforts to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.
2. Clinical Prevention (\$182 million) grants will help improve access to preventive care, including increasing awareness of the new prevention benefits provided under PPACA. They will also help increase availability and use of immunizations, and help integrate behavioral health services into primary care settings.
3. Public Health Infrastructure (\$137 million) investments are designated to aid state and local health departments in health IT development and in education for the public health workforce to enable detection and response to infectious disease outbreaks and other health threats.
4. Research and Tracking (\$133 million) funding will support the transparency and accountability aspects of health policy by collecting data to monitor the impact of PPACA on the health of Americans and to identify and to disseminate evidence-based recommendations on important public health challenges.

In addition, DHHS is supporting a number of targeted initiatives designed to address specific health needs of communities. In particular, DHHS is supporting the PPACA-created National Prevention, Health Promotion and Public Health Council, composed of senior government officials, charged with designing a National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy. HPEC reported on this council and the strategy in an article titled "National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council" published in the [January 2011 HPEC newsletter](#). Also in that article was a description of the ongoing HPEC advocacy effort to obtain community college representation on the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health, charged with advising the council by developing policy and program recommendations.

National Council of State Boards of Nursing Releases Data

On February 11, 2011, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) announced the availability of its publication, [2009 Nurse Licensee Volume and NCLEX Examination Statistics](#). This annual publication provides national and state summary data of boards of nursing licensure activities, as well as data on candidate performance on the NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN examinations. The data included in this publication provide licensing statistics for the period of July 1, 2008, to June 30, 2009.

NCSBN has also released [2010 Knowledge Survey of Nurse Aides Employed in Nursing Homes/Long-term Care, Hospitals/Acute Care and Community/Home Health Care Settings](#). This publication provides findings from a study undertaken to identify the knowledge needed by certified entry-level nurse aides (NAs), defined as individuals, regardless of title, who assist with the delivery of direct nursing care to

clients, patients, and residents. NCSBN states that results of this study can be used to help "item writers and reviewers with test development activities for the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program (NNAAP), while also providing education programs with a better understanding of the knowledge requirements relevant to safe and effective work of certified entry-level NAs."

More Nurses at the Legislative Helm

The 112th Congress is up and running and, as anticipated by the November 2010 election, is bringing a new tone to Washington, DC, politics. One of the first acts of the House of Representatives was a vote to repeal the sweeping health-care reform legislation passed in the 111th Congress, the [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#). At this point, the repeal vote is seen as predominantly "for show" as its passage in the Democratic-led Senate is unlikely and it surely would not be signed by President Obama if both chambers, by some quirk of fate, passed the repeal bill.

As health-care reform repeal and health-care reform implementation continue to be topics of health policy formulation in Washington, DC, it is important to learn about the new members of the 112th Congress who are influencing policy development. This class of new representatives contains four former nurses. With their addition, the total number of nurses serving in Congress is seven. The new representatives are as follows:

Karen Bass (D-CA) is a former nurse and physician assistant. Bass was elected to represent California's 33rd Congressional District. She is the former speaker of the California Assembly, serving since 2004, and the first African-American woman to lead the assembly. Previous to her elected position, Bass worked in nonprofit community activism and is an organization founder.

Diane Black (R-TN) is a former emergency department nurse who now represents Tennessee's 6th Congressional District. Black was elected to replace retiring Congressman Bart Gordon (D-TN). Black also is a former nonprofit community organizer, and a former member of the Tennessee State House and State Senate.

Ann Marie Buerkle (R-NY), a former school nurse, defeated Congressman Dan Maffei (D-NY) to represent New York's 25th District. In addition to being a school nurse, Buerkle is a lawyer and has served as assistant state attorney general for New York.

Renee Ellmers (R-NC) was elected to North Carolina's 2nd District, defeating Congressman Bob Etheridge (D-NC). Before coming to Washington, Ellmers was a surgical intensive care nurse who also worked with her physician husband as clinical director of the Trinity Wound Care Center.

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The American Association of Community Colleges is a national organization representing the nation's close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges and their more than 12 million students.

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