February 23, 2010

Dear Chief Nurse Administrator,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Commissioners of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) – a nationally recognized accrediting agency for baccalaureate and graduate degree nursing programs – to convey CCNE’s position with respect to the accreditation of master’s degree programs in nursing. As the autonomous accrediting arm of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), CCNE reaffirms its commitment to the accreditation of master’s degree nursing programs – including advanced practice nursing and other tracks. CCNE has no intention of changing this policy.

As background, in October 2004, AACN member schools voted to endorse the Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing. This decision called for moving the current level of preparation necessary for advanced nursing practice from the master’s to the doctoral degree level by the year 2015. AACN reports that great progress has been made toward achieving the 2015 transition goal with 120 schools currently enrolling students in Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs and an additional 99 programs in the planning stages.

To date, CCNE has accredited 18 DNP programs. An additional 70 DNP programs are pursuing CCNE accreditation by hosting an on-site evaluation by 2011.

At national forums, workshops, and conferences, CCNE consistently has indicated that the 2015 goal date for the transition of advanced nursing practice programs to the doctoral level is in no way tied to the CCNE accreditation process. Our policy has not changed, and we remain committed to the accreditation of all types of master’s degree nursing programs.

Please contact Dr. Jennifer Butlin, CCNE Director, at jbutlin@aacn.nche.edu if you have any questions about CCNE’s position or the accreditation process.

Sincerely,

Carol Ledbetter, PhD, FNP, BC, FAAN
Chair, Board of Commissioners

cc: CCNE Board of Commissioners