



Congress Pressed to Address Multiple Issues as 2017 Draws to a Close

With just a couple of weeks left in this year, Congress still has much to address before the holidays and upon their return to Capitol Hill in 2018. Below is a summary of the current state of play on the major policy issues driving change in our nation. AACN has been actively tracking and responding to these issues from the lens of academic nursing. Visit [AACN Legislative Activity](#) for further background.

FY 2018

It is not expected that Congress will pass a final Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 package before the current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on December 22. Included in this latest stop-gap measure [passed](#) last week is a provision to allocate leftover funds to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to several states that are set to run out of the program's money by the end of January if Congress does not reauthorize it. Federal funding for CHIP—which covers nine million low income children nationwide—expired on September 30. House members signed on to a [letter](#) to Congressional leadership expressing the urgency of CHIP reauthorization, but not at the expense of the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

Tax Reform

House and Senate [conferees](#) are in the midst of negotiations over the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act ([H.R. 1](#)). The Treasury Department released its [analysis](#) concluding that the tax plan would fall short of being fully offset by revenues.

Higher Education Act Reauthorization

On December 12, the House Education and Workforce Committee [marked up](#) and passed along party lines (23-17) the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education and Reform (PROSPER) Act ([H.R. 4805](#)), following nearly 14 hours of debate. The [final version](#) of the bill offered minor changes despite a multitude of amendments. Among them, the committee rejected by a vote of 20-19 an amendment that would have preserved the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness program](#).

AACN sent a [letter](#) to the House Education and Workforce Committee offering initial perspectives on some of the provisions included in the PROSPER Act. Amidst the challenge of preparing the next generation of nurses and the increasing costs of attending college, AACN is [considering](#) how the bill's federal student aid and repayment options will impact the ability of graduates to enter into the public sector and contribute to the economy.



AACN Webinar on Federal Response to Opioid Epidemic

In continuation of AACN's [commitment](#) to address the opioid crisis across the nation, the association held a webinar, "[CDC and ODPHP's Response to U.S. Opioid Overdose Epidemic](#)," on December 13. The webinar provided an overview of the current state of the epidemic, discussed the role of nurses in pain management, and presented federal resources available for health providers, including nurses. This webinar's recorded version will be made available and offers one CNE credit to eligible attendees. See AACN's efforts in response to the opioid crisis, including webinars and toolkits, [here](#).