AACN Calls on Congress to “Put Patients First” in Health Reform

Post-election, AACN has taken an active role in serving as the voice for academic nursing in the newest iteration of federal health reform. On May 4, the House of Representatives passed the American Health Care Act (H.R. 1628), which would reverse major provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L. 111-148), including state Medicaid expansion, the individual mandate, and coverage for pre-existing conditions.

All eyes now rest on the Senate, which is expected to put forth a draft version of its own health reform bill this week. Multiple sources have indicated that a vote on the measure could take place as early as next week in advance of the July 4 recess.1,2,3 It is suspected that the Senate’s bill proposes more drastic cuts to Medicaid than its counterpart in the House, and would gradually phase down federal payments for Medicaid expansion over a course of three to five years.3

Policies aside, the nature of the Senate’s process for advancing the bill thus far has deviated from the regular order, which typically encompasses committee hearings, markups, and time for healthy debate.

AACN is asking its Grassroots Network members to urge the Senate to “put patients first” in health reform. AACN implores Congress to allow for thoughtful deliberation. Ensuring that our diverse community stakeholders have a voice in the legislative process is a must. AACN believes that supporting access to care for individuals with pre-existing conditions, upholding the principles of essential health benefits, and preserving Medicaid’s ability to protect our nation’s most vulnerable populations are integral to ensuring that patients remain at the center of any proposals. We stood with our colleagues in nursing to support these principles earlier this year, and they are reflective of the values and principles outlined in AACN’s 2017-2018 Federal Policy Agenda. Take action today to send this two-fold message to your Senators.

AACN remains committed to working in a bipartisan fashion to advance health and health care under our core policy values to ensure the delivery system is interprofessional, sustainable, innovative, collaborative, equitable, and inclusive. To review AACN’s expansive portfolio and communications to policymakers in the 115th Congress and the Trump Administration, visit AACN’s webpage Health Reform: Put Patients First.