

Coalition Tackles Nursing Shortage

Group Recognizes Critical Role Nurses Play In Quality Care

A new coalition targeting the nursing workforce shortage and the need to include nurses in a comprehensive health care overhaul was unveiled recently by AARP and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The 21-member group, called the Champion Nursing Coalition, includes the American Health Care Association (AHCA) and an array of diverse organizations that came together in February to raise awareness about the nursing shortage and ultimately achieve permanent solutions to it.

The groups, representing providers, consumers, businesses, and payers of health care, are united around a set of common principles:

- Recognition of the crucial role nurses play in delivering high-quality, affordable health care;
- A commitment to educational out-

reach about the nursing shortage and its impact on access to care;

- Concern about the nursing shortage; and
- A pledge to seek solutions as part of health reform initiatives.

“With nearly 110,000 current caregiving vacancies in nursing facilities nationwide, it is critical that this crisis be addressed immediately for those who need care now and in the future,” said Bruce Yarwood, AHCA president and chief executive officer.

AHCA, along with the other partners—including AARP, the Alzheimer’s Association, the American Hospital Association, America’s Health Insurance Plans, Families USA, Verizon, and the National Business Coalition on Health—launched the coalition at a Capitol Hill breakfast and panel discussion.

In 2008, over 99,000 qualified applicants were turned away from nursing schools nationwide due to the acute shortage of nurse educators and other resources, according to the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA), a joint initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which coordinated the formation of the newly created coalition.

According to CCNA, the nurse shortage is projected to reach 500,000 across all settings by 2025.

“The coalition is a first-of-its-kind effort to link consumers, purchasers, and non-nursing providers of health care in support of common sense, common ground solutions to the U.S. nursing shortage,” said a statement from the center.

—Lynn Wagner

CDC Offers Methods To Limit Norovirus Transmission

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer protocols for health care facilities to contain and prevent the transmission of the highly contagious norovirus. Person-to-person spread of norovirus occurs by direct fecal, oral, and airborne transmission. Such transmission plays a role in propagating disease outbreaks, notably in institutional settings such as long term care facilities. Although interruption of person-to-person transmission can be difficult, certain measures might help.



Measures to prevent person-to-person spread of norovirus include:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water is an effective means of prevention. The recommended procedure is to rub all surfaces of lathered hands together vigorously for 10 seconds and then thoroughly rinse the hands under a stream of water.
- Since environmental surfaces have been implicated in the transmission of enteric viruses, surfaces that have been soiled should be cleaned with an appropriate germicidal product (for example, a 10

percent solution of household bleach), according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

■ Soiled linens and clothes should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation. They should be laundered with detergent at the maximum available cycle length and then machine dried.

■ The spattering or aerosols of infectious material might be involved in disease transmission; wearing masks should be considered for persons who clean areas substantially contaminated by feces or vomitus.

Visit CDC’s Web page on norovirus in health care facilities at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/id_norovirusFS.html.

—Lisa Gelhaus