

Last week was a historic week of events for advocates of health care reform and nursing. The House passed H.R. 3962, "The Affordable Health Care for America Act." I am sure you have seen a tremendous amount of information about this act but I want you to know the specific provisions that affect nursing that ANA has worked to ensure are included in the final legislation:

- Improvements in nursing programs – including increasing loan repayment benefits for nursing students and faculty; removing the cap on awards for nursing students pursuing doctoral degrees; and clarifying that nurse-managed health centers are eligible for grant awards.
- The use of provider neutral language – in order to meet our nation's healthcare needs, an integrated national healthcare workforce that looks beyond physicians must be put into action. Advanced Practice Registered Nurses are proven providers of high-quality, cost effective care. Ensuring that APRNs are recognized according to their full scope is vital to removing barriers to practice and ensuring vital patient access.
- Emphasis on quality – we all know that nursing care and quality patient care are inextricably linked. ANA has worked to include language that supports the collection and reporting of data on practices and outcomes to influence patient care decisions and assure your ability to provide quality care.
- Focus on the nursing shortage - the current House bill establishes a new program to address the projected nurse shortages and to increase the capacity for educating nurses.

I was also pleasantly surprised to see that our work continues to be recognized at the highest levels of government. Saturday night, while Congress was voting, I was honored to receive a personal call from President Obama himself. Once I got over the shock of hearing "Becky this is Barack Obama," I listened as he expressed his gratitude for the work ANA and its members did for the cause of health care reform, and as he's done in the past, he expressed his appreciation for all the work nurses do.

Of course this important work would not have been possible without the support of ANA members who helped to reach out to their representatives and whose membership help fund the work of ANA. Their support is invaluable to the profession and the patients we serve.

I would like to invite you to become one of those members. There are many ways to join and participate in ANA. Please take a moment to explore your options by going to [NursingWorld.org/JoinANA](http://NursingWorld.org/JoinANA).

I look forward to welcoming you as a member.

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P.S. – For more information on health care reform, check out [RNaction.org](http://RNaction.org).