



The Advocate

NURSE PRACTITIONERS OF NEW YORK

WWW.NPNY.NET

WINTER 2010

Before I launch into the current health care reform issues rant, I would like to thank everyone for their excellent work in 2009 and wish all *Happy Holidays*.

We continue to thrive as an organization. Growing the organization rests with members bringing other NPs into the fold. This year I precepted two NP students and, following a tradition started by Helen Ruddy, FNP, I bought each a student membership for \$30. This gives them information about NPNY and keeps them abreast of issues affecting nurse practitioners. Giving our students memberships shows them the importance of joining a professional organization; my own entrée into an NP organization was through student membership.

When I last wrote this column, the House of Representatives and Senate conference committees were debating the Patient Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590). The House passed their bill in November 2009 and the Senate is debating their version of the bill in hopes of passage before the Christmas holiday.

ON THE HEALTH CARE FRONT

At this stage, both the House and Senate legislation would:

- **Create a Health Insurance Exchange**, which establishes a marketplace where specifically identified people could purchase an insurance plan. At the moment, self-employed persons, people who do not have employer insurance plans and small

From the President's Desk...

businesses would be allowed to participate.

- **Expand insurance to about 36 million people by 2019.** About 46 million are currently uninsured.
- **Outlaw discrimination based on pre-existing conditions and gender.** Insurance companies will have to cover people with pre-existing medical conditions and premiums will be the same for men and women.
- **Eliminate coverage limits and price gouging.** This would cap out-of-pocket expenses and ban insurance companies from setting limits about how much health care they will cover for each person each year.

However, both these bills are still problematic. Our organization and individuals need to contact our representatives to let them know:

- **Both bills leave millions uninsured:** for the House bill about 18 million until 2019, and for the Senate about 24 million.
- **The Senate bill eliminated the public option and reforms do not start quickly enough.** Some House legislation goes into effect in 2013; Senate legislation in 2014.
- **Mandated insurance without public option or regulatory controls is still too expensive.**
- **Reproductive rights are severely**

restricted in the House bill (Stupack amendment).

- **The Senate bill could discriminate against low-income workers.** The free-rider provision penalizes employers for hiring lower income workers.
- **The Senate bill would tax insurance plans with good benefits.**

TWO MORE AFFECT NURSES

Two health care bills in the pipeline:

- **S.1569 Medicare Graduate Nursing Education Act.** Introduced by Senator Debbie Stabenow (Michigan) and co-sponsored by our NY Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Medicare would pay for educational and other costs related to expanding nurse practitioner programs. This legislation would make NP education visible in health policy and reform debates.

- **S.1161 Nurse Faculty and Physical Therapist Education Act of 2009.** Introduced by Senator Jeff Bingaman (New Mexico); no New York co-sponsors. This bill would establish a Nurse Faculty Education Program to ensure an adequate supply of nurse faculty by providing grants.

NPNY has sent letters to both Senators Schumer and Gillibrand voicing our support for a public option and effective federal regulations to prevent abusive practices by private insurers and calling for neutral language in legislation so that clinicians or health practitioners are preferred terms rather than physicians.

—Susan Moscou, FNP, MPH, PhD

Good News, Bad News

Some news is good, some bad, but we're working on change. The good news: there are 140,000 NPs in the US; 14,000 are in NY State, mostly in primary care.

And more physician organizations acknowledge the work NPs perform. In a 2009 monograph (NPs in Primary Care), the College of Physicians wrote: "Physicians and nurse practitioners complete training with different levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities that while not equivalent are complementary. As trained health care professionals, physicians and nurse practitioners share a commitment to providing high-quality care."

The bad news comes out of a recent American Medical Association (AMA) document which asked: "Is the NP educational system currently ensuring that NPs are adequately trained to provide appropriate care for patients?" and "Are NPs being granted scopes of practice for which they are not adequately prepared?"

Scores of nurse organizations responded by letter: "the document contains numerous factual misrepresentations and misleading conclusions. We do not accept the AMA's attempt to change the perceptions of NP practice as anything other than fully qualified professionals working within a legally established scope of practice."

LOSING ITS STRANGLEHOLD

In fact, the AMA may be losing its stranglehold on doctors. Sermo, an online US physician community of 110,000 subscribers, asked members if the AMA represented the physician community. Out of 4400 responding, 75% said they were not AMA members; 89% that AMA did not speak for them; and 83% did not know that only 15% of AMA's revenue comes from membership dues, with most being derived from the organization's various business ventures and licensed products.

— Irene Van Slyke, FNP

Lobby Day in Albany 2010

In late January the Legislative Committee will meet to plan for our 2010 Lobby Day—our annual time to interact face to face with our legislators. With the announcement of the calendar for the new session in Albany, we will finalize the date for Lobby Day. All those interested in being involved, please contact Helen Ruddy (hruddy@nyc.rr.com) or Irene Van Slyke (irene.vanslyke@verizon.net).



NPNY CALENDAR: Earn CEs for Each Program

EVERYBODY WELCOME. FREE FOR MEMBERS; \$15 FOR NONMEMBERS; \$5 FOR NP STUDENTS.

◆ THURS., JAN. 21, 2010

Program: Everything You Wanted to Know about Immunizations But Were Afraid to Ask (Earn 2 CEs) Learn how to identify “recommended” vs “required” immunizations, pediatric and adult schedules, and myths about immunization, plus glean talking points about immunization safety.

Speaker: Sheila Palevsky, MD, MPH, has been the Provider Liaison in NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of Immunization for the past 9 years; her responsibilities include providing professional education about immunization as well as immunization practice and related topics. She has been Immunization Representative for the American Academy of Pediatrics since 2004 and has written review articles on immunization for CDC and NIH.

◆ THURS., FEB. 18, 2010

Program: The Role of Integrative Medicine in Health and Well-being (Earn 2 CEs) The focus of integrative medicine is to find out who you are, how you live and what your personal

goals may be and how your lifestyle impacts illnesses, injury and chronic medical conditions.

Speaker: Kathy Sanders, FNP, MPH, is board certified as a family nurse practitioner. She has a master’s in public health and has completed a fellowship in integrative medicine at the University of Arizona with Dr. Andrew Weil through a Bravewell Collaborative scholarship; she works at the Center for Integrative Medicine and Wellness, Stamford Hospital, CT.

◆ Time:

6 - 6:30 pm Networking & light dinner

6:30 - 7 pm News & announcements

7 - 8:30 pm Program

◆ **Location:** Board Room, 18th floor, Pace University. Approach security at Spruce St. entrance of Pace (Schimmel Center).

◆ **Subway:** 2, 3, 4, 5, J, M, Z, A, C to Fulton/Broadway/Nassau or 6 to Brooklyn Bridge.

◆ **Details:** *More information: check NPNY web site. These activities have been submitted to the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) for approval to award contact hours. NYSNA is accredited as an approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.*

NP Has Unique Role in Primary Care for College Students

I have been an ANP since 2002 and the sole 12-month, full-time prescribing provider at Baruch College Student Health Center since 2008. I have worked in college health for the past 5 years, previously at Health Services at Columbia University, and have become passionate about this specialty area of health care.

IMPLEMENT HEALTH INITIATIVES

Baruch has a population of about 16,000 with one of the most culturally diverse student populations in the US. Getting to know the students and fine tuning my cultural competence as I provide care is often one of the most enjoyable parts of my day. As a publicly funded school, Baruch attracts students who are the first in their family to go to college, work part or full-time while going to school, and are largely uninsured. In my current role, I provide routine physical exams, sports participation/study abroad/pre-employment medical clearances, GYN exams, family planning, STI screening, sick visits, chronic disease management, and required immunization compliance.

At Baruch, part of the City University of New York (CUNY), the Student Health Center falls under Student Affairs. I work closely with this department to promote the Center and implement campus-wide health initiatives. My employment situation is unique; Baruch has a contract with Beth Israel (BI) to run the Student Health Center. I am an employee of Beth Israel Medical Center and part of the Dept. of Occupational Medicine/Employee Health Services with a resulting hospital-based salary—not a typically academia-based,

historically low compensation. The nurse practitioners at BI have recently joined the 1199 Union. The balancing act between BI, CUNY administration and Baruch administration is sometimes challenging for me but has dramatically improved my professional and political communication skills.

MANY ARE UNINSURED

There are no minimal insurance requirements for any CUNY school. Students, who have insurance, may be insured through parents or jobs, but are typically enrolled in one of the managed Medicaid programs (Child/Family Health Plus) if they qualify. Many students, not meeting the criteria, are uninsured. International students are largely uninsured, or the insurance from their home country is not accepted. A nominal health service fee is included in Baruch’s overall tuition so there is no charge for students to be seen in the health center, but fees for lab tests and specialists are not included. However, Beth Israel has significantly discounted the rates for lab tests and for specialist consultations so that cost is typically not a barrier to care for the students. I also utilize services at Bellevue Hospital—a gem in the community for the uninsured.

I find working with the college health population both personally and professionally rewarding. For many students, the Student Health Center is their first encounter with the health care system as adults. I have the opportunity to educate young people about primary care and to influence positively decisions about their health that will have lifelong impact.

— Juliette G. Blount, ANP

Apply for Scholarship to ACNP Summit

“**I**f you’re not at the table, you may be on the menu”; this has become my mantra of late. It is critical for NPs to be at the table during this important time of health care reform. Last newsletter, I announced a scholarship for the registration fee—to the American College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP) National Policy Summit, Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 2010, in Washington, DC—open to NPNY members. Submit a brief statement regarding interest and/or goals with regard to policy to Helen Ruddy, 21-26 21st Road, Astoria, NY 11105 (hruddy@nyc.rr.com) by Dec. 31, 2009. The Summit provides NPs with the latest information from national NP leaders on legislation, advocacy and practice issues. It is the time to take NP issues directly to the people best positioned to make change: members of Congress!

Also there is an Advanced Public Policy Institute sponsored by ACNP from Feb. 26 to 28. DNP students may be able to obtain independent study credit for attendance.

Who will join me at the table?

— Helen Ruddy FNP

NPNY Advocates for NPs in Albany



Amanda Brei, NPNY board member met with Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Chair of the Committee on Education, to talk about independent practice for NPs during the 2009 Lobby Day in Albany.

NPNY-The Advocate

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