

# Federal Legislative Report



## The Home Health Planning and Improvement Act (HR 4993 / S 2814)

This legislation would allow Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) and physician assistants (PAs) to order home health services under Medicare in accordance with state law, and ensure seniors and disabled citizens have timely access to home health services.

Federal and Oregon law has recognized the independent practice of advanced practice nurses for decades and these health care professionals now provide the majority of skilled care to home health patients. Unfortunately, a quirk in Medicare law has kept them from signing home health plans of care and from certifying Medicare patients for the home health benefit. This outdated prohibition has led to delays in health care delivery and inconvenienced patients and their families. Additionally, delays can lead to increased cost to the Medicare system when patients are unnecessarily left in more expensive institutional settings.

The entire Oregon Congressional delegation has signed on to this legislation, thanks to the hard work of Oregon's advanced practice nurses. The next step is to get these bills heard and passed before the end of this year.

- CONTACT SENATOR RON WYDEN, member of the Senate Finance Committee, and thank him for supporting this important bill and ask him to urge Committee Chair Max Baucus (D-MT) to schedule a hearing on S 2814 before the end of the year.
- CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE EARL BLUMENAUER, member of the House Ways and Means Committee, and thank him for supporting this important bill and ask him to urge Committee Chair Sandy Levin (D-MI) and Subcommittee Chair Pete Stark (D-CA) to schedule a hearing on HR 4993 before the end of the year.

## Affordable Care Act – Prevention and Public Health Fund

The Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that it's providing \$320 million in grants to strengthen and expand the health care workforce. This additional funding is part of the Prevention and Public Health Fund of the Affordable Care Act. Some of the nursing specific investments include:

### Advanced Nursing Education Expansion (ANEE) - \$31 million

The ANEE program will provide \$31 million in funds to 26 schools of nursing to increase full-time enrollment in primary care nurse practitioner (NP) and nurse midwife (NMW) programs. It is projected that over 1,300 primary care nursing stipends will be supported through this 5 year program. By providing a stipend of \$22,000 per student per year for up to two years, this funding aims to reduce the financial burden of attending school full-time and to accelerate graduation rates to increase the number of advanced practice registered nurses. Grantees project that 600 NPs and NMWs in total will be fully educated by 2015.

Included in that announcement was the success of OHSU School of Nursing securing \$1,283,040 in student stipends to increase the number of primary care NPs we prepare in Oregon over the next 5 years.

### Nurse Managed Health Clinics (NMHC) - \$14.8 million

This program will fund 10 grantees for 3 years to operate NMHCs to provide primary care. A NMHC is a nurse practice arrangement, managed by advanced practice registered nurses, that provides primary care or wellness services to underserved or vulnerable populations and that is associated with a school, college, university or department of nursing, federally qualified health center, or independent nonprofit health or social services agency. Clinics serve as valuable clinical training sites for students in primary care, and also enhance nursing practice by increasing the number of clinical teaching sites for interdisciplinary primary and community health students.