
Don't Forget to Register for the Annual Conference—October 8-9, at The Inn at St. John's in Plymouth, Michigan the registration form is on our website. More details can be found at the end of this newsletter. We'd really enjoy seeing you in person.

NOTE: While the registration officially ends on September 28, you may still register for the conference up to and including the days of the conference (on-site).

Change of Membership Renewal Date

Consistency...Earlier this year, the Board of Directors voted to change the date for renewal of dues to October 1 of each year for all members.

Prorated...If you have paid dues this year, you will receive a prorated statement in October reflecting the number of months for which you have already paid toward your yearly dues. For example, if you paid dues in April of 2009, you would be invoiced for six months, or half year dues, which would make you current until October of 2010. This would hold true for all categories of members. If you have not paid dues this year, then paying dues with the invoice you receive in October 2009 will make your membership active until October 2010.

I will be working with Lynne Harris, the Corresponding Secretary, to ensure that you are credited for the number of months paid and the only individuals who

have not yet paid dues for any portion of 2009 will receive an invoice for a full year. After the initial invoice in October, one reminder will be sent to individuals who have not paid dues by November 30, and if dues are not paid by January 1, 2010, the individual's name and information will be removed from the membership list.

Savings... These decisions have been made to simplify accounting, thereby saving money on mailing, printing, and membership cards.

Planning...This will also help the Board determine the funding RN-AIM will have available for the upcoming year and provide us with a much clearer picture of who we are, what we can offer you in the way of pertinent membership benefits, and what knowledge and skills are reflected in our up-to-the-date membership. Your input will also be solicited.

The Board appreciates your patience as we make this significant change in how membership renewals are managed and we look forward to continued growth and opportunities throughout 2010 and beyond.

Health Care Reform Slogs Forward

If you're alive and breathing in 2009, you have no doubt heard many of the facts, non-facts and out-and-out rumors about what's planned for us and one thing that nurses understand is that health care of the same quality and accessibility is not available to many of our populations and that non-access forces people without coverage to be among the unhealthiest members of society and use the most costly kinds of health care. Massachusetts, which has been among the most forward-looking states attempting to deal with health care, found in a recent study that the users of emergency room care have trouble accessing care in other settings and are a "sicker, more disabled and more chronically ill population than other populations."

These individuals are less likely to use a doctor's office or clinic setting for care and are more likely to identify the emergency room as their source of service. While people cited various reasons for choosing emergency room care, a staggering 87.9% of the most frequent emergency room users are individuals with chronic illness or disability.

No doubt, we would find similar circumstances throughout Michigan. As unemployment has risen, hundreds of thousands more citizens have joined the ranks of those without access to care and, thus, seek publicly-funded sources of coverage such as Medicaid. While at the same time the Michigan legislature has voted for cuts in funding that make Medicaid services less available. Health care providers are facing cuts that may move them into the ranks of providers that refuse to care for individuals with Medicaid.

Recent statistics from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – Health Care Consumer Confidence Index, find that consumer confidence in health care, while still very high among US citizens at 96.1%, dropped 1/1% in August 2009; confidence among Medicare eligible seniors has dropped more than 14 points in the last two months; and a continuing drop in confidence among young adults, aged 18-34 as well.

Among the individuals polled, 52.5% indicated worry about their ability to pay for their future health care needs; 48% worry that they will not be afford all the routine health care services they need; 43.7% worry they will not be able to afford their prescriptions; 29.7% worry they will go bankrupt from not being able to pay medical bills; 22.2% worry that coverage from public programs will continue to decline; and, 21.3% report that they have delayed needed health care during the past year due to cost.

There is wide support among physicians and other health care providers for a public option as part of whatever health care reform package is eventually passed that would offer individuals the option of enrolling in either a new public program like Medicaid or in private plans. There is also increasing support for expanding Medicare eligibility to those between the ages of 55 and 64.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reports daily on a variety of subjects related to health care and reform at www.fundingalert@rwjf.org. The subjects range from the Daily News Digest on Health Reform to reports on subjects related to vulnerable populations, public health and **nursing**; how to slow the growth of health care costs while protecting and increasing the quality of care using evidence-based research; and data about uninsured populations and how they influence the cost of health care.

New Publications Identify Nursing's Prescription for Closing the Quality and Safety Gap

The first of two new publications, "Case Studies in Transforming Hospital Nursing and Building Cultures of Safety" illustrates how keeping patients in their same room and bed throughout their hospitalization can help the eliminate the many the costs and risks of moving patients from room to room and/or transfer to other units. The study cites that 40-70% of patients on typical inpatient nursing units are transferred every day and some move as many as six times during one stay. This increases the possibilities for lost information, treatment delays, incompatibilities in record-keeping and wasted supplies and staff time.

The second publication titled "How Nurses are Shaping, and Being Shaped, by Health Information Technologies," explores opportunities for improved quality and safety using such innovations as electronic

medical records, bar coding of a variety of supplies and medications and identification of patients and telenursing – providing care for individuals in unconnected sites by the use of webcam monitoring, particularly to provide an extra level of assessment for patients at high risk for rehospitalization.

Visit www.newsdigest@rwjf.org for an ongoing discussion of patient care issues, opportunities for advanced nursing study, expansion of funding for nursing education and clinical practice, and recent nursing research. It provides a wealth of information for nurses and about nurses, and has also focused on providing Congress with information about the growing need for highly skilled nurses to practice in a variety of health care settings.

New Careers In Nursing Scholarship Program Established

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing are working together to expand enrollment in schools of nursing while enhancing diversity in the nursing workforce.

[NCIN Scholarship Program is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)

For more nursing scholarship information, go to: <http://www.newcareersinnursing.org/>

University of Michigan to Offer Online DNP Degree Program

The University of Michigan-Flint has announced plans to launch an online Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program, the Associated Press reports....

Records of Health Worker Misdeeds Kept Secret *NPR, Joseph Shapiro, 09/03/2009*

Twenty-two years ago, the federal government started keeping a list of nurses, nurse aides, pharmacists and pharmacy aides who've been disciplined by state licensing boards. It's called the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112490243>

HHS Announces \$13.4 Million in Financial Assistance to Support Nurses

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) announced the release of \$13.4 million for loan repayments to nurses who agree to practice in facilities with critical shortages and for schools of nursing to provide loans to students who will become nurse faculty. The funds were made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), signed Feb. 17, 2009, by President Obama. The awards come from two programs administered by

HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). NELRP expects to accept new applications beginning January 2010 [Sign up to receive e-mail notification](#) when the next Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program application is available. [Nurse Education Loan Repayment Program](#) (\$8.1M) and the [Nurse Faculty Loan Program](#) (\$5.3M)

And the Musing...

Nurses need to be active participants in the debates about health care and the reform of the current system to address the needs, not only of those with health care coverage, but the nearly 47 million people in the United States without coverage and often without access to care. Nurses provide more health care than any other health professional group and our knowledge and skills are essential as this discussion moves forward. It is up to you to ensure that your patients, friends and colleagues understand the components of the various bills being considered and that they have access to accurate information about how health care is likely to evolve in the coming years.

What is occurring now is only the first step and will probably not afford anyone everything they think should be included (or excluded), but make sure that you are part of the discussion and not just an observer. Attend town hall meetings, talk to your legislators at both the state and national levels, make sure you have accurate information and become a conduit of that information for others in your community. How health care will look in the future will depend on our ability to articulate the failings of the current system and what is needed to increase its availability and quality.



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Make sure you're up-to-date on your mammograms and encourage all the women in your life to be, too.



National Mammography Day - Friday October 16, 2009

Nationwide, the third Friday in October of each year is National Mammography Day, first proclaimed by President Clinton in 1993. On this day, or throughout the month, radiologists provide free or discounted screening mammograms, and women are encouraged to make a mammography appointment. [\[more\]](#)

RN-AIM Annual Conference details continued from page 1:

The conference brochure, including registration form can be found on our website or go directly to the form at: http://www.rn-aim.org/media/autogen/2009_RN-AIM_Conference_Brochure_6-14-09x.pdf

To get driving directions from where you're at go to: <http://www.mapquest.com/> Type in your address under "start" then, under "end" type in: 44045 Five Mile Rd., Plymouth, Michigan 48170.

As stated on page 1, the conference registration dates have been extended. On-site registration will also be accepted. If you are paying with a credit card, you can call me at 517.455.7471 or email the requested information to: Nurse@RN-AIM.org Please refer to the conference brochure for student, member and non-member rates for either day or both. If you have questions about the conference or anything else RN-AIM-related, as always, feel free to contact me.

Mary Scoblic, Editor