The Future of Nursing Institute of Medicine Report: One Year Later

One year ago, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health, a landmark report that provided a blueprint for transforming the nursing profession to improve health care and meet the needs of diverse populations (IOM, 2010). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), in collaboration with AARP, embarked on a Campaign for Action to advance the recommendations. The Campaign envisions a nation where all Americans have access to high-quality, patient-centered care in a health care system where nurses contribute as essential partners in achieving success.

As the study director of the IOM report, I had high hopes that this report would galvanize the nursing community and inspire non-nursing organizations to act on the recommendations to improve patient care. For the most part, the response to the report has exceeded my expectations. Since its release, The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health has been—and remains—the top-visited report on the IOM’s website. In fact, the website crashed from all the traffic the day the report was released.

I am especially pleased that the nursing community, which has traditionally seen its political capital hindered by differences of opinion, coalesced around this report. The Tri-Council for Nursing, which includes the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Nurses Association, the American Organization of Nurse Executives, and the National League for Nursing, endorsed the report and is working collaboratively to advance the recommendations. Diverse partners, including the American Hospital Association, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Aetna, The Joint Commission, and the Leapfrog Group, have also taken leadership roles to advance the recommendations. They realize that fully utilizing the expertise and experience of nurses and enhancing their skills and capabilities will improve access and the quality of patient care.

I have been amazed as well by the enthusiasm of diverse partners at the state level that are organizing into Action Coalitions to effect long-term sustainable change at the local, state, and regional levels. These Action Coalitions are capturing best practices, determining research needs, tracking lessons learned, and identifying achievable goals. AARP is providing technical assistance to 36 Action Coalitions, and we anticipate having most states on board by early 2012. Each Action Coalition is developing and implementing a unique set of regional goals and activities within the framework of the IOM recommendations, given local needs and priorities.

Most of the Action Coalitions are focused on promoting education progression for nurses, which will help us to meet our nation’s goal of matriculating an additional 760,000 nurses with a baccalaureate degree in nursing by 2020. The New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium (NMNEC), consisting of all state-supported nursing programs in New Mexico, is developing one state nursing curriculum for all schools of nursing to use and a state faculty pool that can be shared to alleviate the faculty shortage and allow more nursing students to receive baccalaureate degrees. The BSN curriculum will be offered at all participating consortium schools, with the BSN de-
gree awarded by either the University of New Mexico or New Mexico State University. Under this plan, students could obtain the BSN without leaving their home community.

However, on the anniversary of the 1-year mark, I wish that more physician organizations and physicians were involved in promoting the Campaign for Action. Many physician organizations voiced their opposition to the report, based on the recommendation that scope-of-practice barriers be removed for nurses, without considering how the recommendations as a whole can be used to promote high-quality, patient-centered care for all Americans. I am glad, though, that 12 physician and nursing organization leaders participated in three RN/MD Roundtable Consensus meetings hosted by the RWJF this past summer. The meetings were intended to move beyond the differences that divide nurses and physicians and helped physician and nurse leaders to articulate the collaborative roles that each profession plays in the delivery of high-quality health care. Their conclusions and how to implement them will be detailed in a forthcoming report.

Another highlight is that the Indiana Action Coalition has taken advantage of the strong interprofessional ties between the Indiana University School of Medicine and the School of Nursing to further the Campaign’s goals of fostering interprofessional collaboration. Indiana University offers a model interprofessional education program, in which medical and nursing students take joint classes and participate in clinical simulations. The Action Coalition last summer held an interprofessional education workshop. Pediatric surgeon Scott Engum, who directs the Simulation Center on the Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis campus, is serving as the co-chair of the Campaign’s Interprofessional Collaboration and Collaborative Care Action Committee along with Linda Finke, Dean of the Health Sciences School at Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne University.

We have also made less progress than we anticipated with our efforts to advance the recommendation of building an infrastructure for the collection and analysis of health care work force data because Congress has not appropriated funding to enable the Workforce Commission to do its work. It is my hope that the Workforce Commission will be given funding in the next year to do the work it was intended to do. Fortunately, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and the National Forum of Nursing Workforce Centers have signed a memorandum of understanding that will ensure a minimum data set for each state in our country.

On the 1-year anniversary of *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, I am incredibly pleased by the energetic and widespread strategic planning that has occurred at the national and state levels to begin to implement the recommendations. I am also pleased that RWJF plans to announce new programming soon that will help advance the recommendations. We knew when the IOM released the report that implementation would take many partners and many years, and we still have a long road ahead of us to transform the nursing field to improve patient care. But if the progress in future years continues at the pace of this past year, we will fulfill our vision of a nation where all Americans have access to high-quality, patient-centered care in a health care system where nurses contribute as essential partners in achieving success.

**REFERENCE**