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President

ACNM Response to the NCSBN APRN Vision Paper

A draft APRN Vision Paper was circulated for public comment by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) in February 2006. The stated vision is “to provide direction for advanced practice nursing regulation to improve safety by creating uniformity and simplicity of requirements” for licensure. This paper may be accessed at the NCSBN Website at www.ncsbn.org/regulation/nlc_licensure_aprn.asp. In short, the paper appears to suggest that regulatory bodies, in this case the boards of nursing, would assume authority related to accreditation, certification and licensure for advanced practice nurses (defined as nurse-midwives, nurse practitioners and certified registered nurse anesthetists) in order to assure consistency, transferability of licenses from state to state, quality of education programs, and adequacy of certification exams. As written, it appears that the NCSBN wants boards of nursing to have the legal authority to approve advanced practice nursing education programs, review any innovations or changes in such programs, and review and approve proprietary certification examinations. In addition, NCSBN is promoting the concept of a core APRN examination followed by a specialty exam.

In addition, it is proposed that a “residency” requirement be put into place for all advanced practice nurses, although it

is unclear how such a need was identified and how this requirement relates to public safety. In the case of the ACNM DOA accreditation criteria, there are requirements that speak to the necessary clinical experiences for midwives and the evidence supports the fact that ACNM DOA accredited education programs graduate safe beginning level practitioners. As noted in our response, it would be extremely difficult to establish such residencies. This requirement would create a major barrier for all individuals who want to become advanced practice nurses.

Most of the ideas advanced in this paper run contrary to the standards and values of the ACNM and our members. ACNM, the ACNM Division of Accreditation (DOA) and the American Midwifery Certification Board have all corresponded with the NCSBN to review the serious concerns generated by the vision paper. You can read the ACNM and ACNM DOA letter on the ACNM Website. We will continue to dialogue with the NCSBN and attended the APRN Roundtable in Chicago on April 11 to express our concerns and monitor the status of this proposal. This vision, if adopted, could become a serious issue as nurse-midwives are regulated by boards of nursing in 38 states, by other regulatory bodies in 12 states and CMs are regulated in 3 states. Many CNMs/CMs are also licensed as NPs.

ACNM and the ACNM DOA also noted that the typical board of nursing does not regulate non-nurses, so we would like the NCSBN to be supportive of our efforts to create Boards of Midwifery as the appropriate regulatory body for midwives. We stated again our strong belief that a graduate degree in nursing should not be the only degree that is recognized for licensure. We firmly believe that the public would be best served by the ACNM DOA accreditation process, the AMCB certification exam, adherence to the ACNM Standards for the Practice of Midwifery and licensure guided by evidence.

At the April 11, 2006, NCSBN APRN Roundtable, attended by ACNM Regional Representative Cheri Moran and Executive Director Deanne Williams, the NCSBN APRN Advisory Board stated that this document was a work in process and would not be presented for approval at the NCSBN delegate assembly in the fall. The ACNM Board of Directors asks all members to stay alert and to monitor regulatory changes that attempt to undermine the sound and well-established processes already in place. The position of ACNM on these issues is clearly stated in several position papers and national office staff is well prepared to assist local chapters with their legislative efforts. **Q**

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**Members are welcome to
attend any open session of a
Board of Directors meeting.**

2006 Meetings:

June 1-2, Salt Lake City, Utah

September 14-17, Washington, DC area

December 1-3, Washington, DC area