Background: Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), existing loan programs for nurses and midwives are expanded, and a new Graduate Nursing Education demonstration is being established. The Graduate Nurse Education Demonstration will become effective in 2012. The other provisions described below are effective as of 2011.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will be responsible for implementation and enforcement of these provisions.

ACNM Position/Policy: ACNM strongly supports education policy improvements in the health care reform law.

Summary of Provisions

Nursing Student Loan Program (Section 5202): Current education loan amounts under the Nursing Student Loan Program have increased from $2,500 to $3,300 and loan amounts available for the final two academic years grew from $4,000 to $5,200. The modified aggregate loan levels for all academic years rose from $13,000 to $17,000. These changes were enacted during fiscal year (FY) 2010-2011. After FY 2011, obtainable loan amounts will be adjusted to provide for cost-of-attendance increases for the yearly loan rate and the aggregate of the loans.

Advanced Education Nursing Grants (Section 5308): Participation in the Advanced Education Nursing Grant Program is extended to those programs that are accredited by the American College of Nurse-Midwives Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education. Midwifery programs are now established as a separate section of the new law. Previously, midwifery education grants had been linked to a section of the law relating to nurse practitioners.

Nursing Loan Repayment and Scholarship Program (Section 5310): The Loan Repayment and Scholarship program is expanded to allow nurses (Loan Repayment) and nursing students (Scholarship) to receive education loan funding if they agree to serve as nurse faculty for at least two years at an accredited school of nursing.

Nurse Faculty Loan Program (Section 5311): The School of Nursing Student Loan Fund provides students with more loan support and improved repayment plans. The
provision expands the educational repayment amount through this program from $30,000 to $35,500.

In addition, the newly created Eligible Individual Student Loan Repayment Program entitles current graduate students or recently graduated master’s/doctoral students to enter into an agreement for the repayment of education loans in exchange for service as full-time faculty members at an accredited school of nursing for at least four years. The loan amounts being offered include up to $40,000 for master’s students and $80,000 for doctoral students.

Funding priority is awarded under both programs to doctoral nursing students.

**Workforce Diversity Grants (Section 5404):** With the goal of boosting workforce diversity and retention, eligibility for these grants are expanded to include the following applicants:

- Diploma or associate-degree nurses entering bridge- or degree-completion programs
- Students enrolled in pre-entry preparation or accelerated degree programs
- Individuals participating in advanced education preparation
- Professionals contributing to retention activities

**Graduate Nurse Education Demonstration (Section 5509):** Title XVIII of the Social Security Act is amended to provide payment to five hospitals for the costs of bolstering advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) training programs. The demonstration program will aid in the growth of midwifery, as will the expanded authorities under the existing nursing programs.

Total awards include $50 million over four fiscal years (FY 2012-2015) for a total of $200 million. Reimbursement will be based on growth within these APRN programs when compared with the average growth in other APRN programs from 2006-2010.

The five hospitals that receive funding must formulate written agreements with one or more accredited schools of nursing that describe 1) qualified training and 2) how the hospitals will reimburse the school(s) for the costs associated with qualified training.

The agreement must also include two or more applicable nonhospital community-based care settings where APRN education occurs. A waiver is established for hospitals in rural and medically underserved communities where 50% of the education would not occur in community-based care settings. Federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, and other nonhospital settings that are determined appropriate by the Secretary of Health and Human Services are considered community-based care settings.

According to the definition provided in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, “Qualified training means training that provides an advanced practice registered nurse with the clinical skills necessary to provide primary care, preventive care, transitional
care, chronic care management, and other services appropriate for individuals entitled to, or enrolled for, benefits under part A of Title XVIII of the Social Security Act, or enrolled under part B of such title."

An evaluation of the demonstration program will be conducted and reported to Congress no later than October 17, 2017. The report must include information on the "growth in the number of advanced practice registered nurses with respect to a specific base year as a result of the demonstration."

References: