

AANA Region 4 Director's Update
May 1, 2010
Submitted by Dennis Bless, CRNA, MS



The AANA Board of Directors has been very busy conducting the business of the association. The following is a summary of the major issues that have come before us. The AANA continues to closely monitor the progression of healthcare reform legislation recently passed and signed into law by President Obama. Our primary priorities relate to ensuring patient access to care that is of very high quality, at a cost that individuals and our country can afford. Our attention continues to focus on the following four issues:

Promoting provider nondiscrimination, to ensure that patients have access to high quality healthcare from qualified licensed providers. Nondiscrimination language based upon provider licensure was included in this legislation. The AANA has sought this protection for more than a decade.

Advancing CRNA and nurse workforce development, to reverse persistent shortages and cost-effectively ensure patient access to care

Securing access to rural anesthesia care, by correcting recent Medicare administrative decisions affecting rural hospitals

Ensuring patient access to care through sufficient reimbursement for CRNA services in plans for the uninsured, and through reversing the dramatic 21.2% Medicare Part B cuts. A temporary “fix” was approved by Congress. The extension expires June 1st. After that, if Congress fails to address the SRF issue, the 21.2% Medicare Part B cuts will go into effect.

Last fall President Walker appointed the Strategic Reserve Fund (SRF) Taskforce. The charge for this taskforce is *“To evaluate the effectiveness of past SRF allocations and make recommendations no later than the 2010 Mid Year Assembly Board of Directors meeting for any changes in SRF focus or criteria. If these recommendations require a bylaws change, the task force will recommend language to the Board of Directors”*. The SRF Taskforce sent their report to the AANA BOD to the board. The report of the task forces efforts was shared with the AANA members present at the MYA in open session and again during the open forum. Recommendations from the taskforce were approved by the AANA BOD. A possible bylaws amendment related to the SODC/SRF is being considered at the time of this update. A related issue has been brought forward regarding the SODC committee composition. The SODC was charged to review the composition of the SODC and engage the SRF Task Force in this process taking advantage of the work already done by the SRF Task Force as well as the rich knowledge and history embedded in that group. Recommendations were presented to the board at Mid-Year Assembly.

As a result of a member inquiry, a board task force was convened to evaluate the policy for notifying AANA committee members of their appointment. It was proposed and adopted to notify committee members of their appointment approximately one week prior to the annual meeting. The intent is to facilitate networking of committee members attending the annual meeting.

As a result of member input and feedback during the Fall Assembly of States, the board of directors has reconsidered its previous decision to discontinue the Fall Assembly of States beginning in 2011. At the January board meeting the board voted to continue hosting the Fall Assembly of States with a strong leadership focus.

As you may recall from the annual business meeting, the association was determined to be out of compliance with a bylaw requiring that all resolutions be reviewed on an annual basis. An emergency resolution was presented to the membership and was subsequently voted down. As a result, the FY 2010 Resolutions Committee was charged with reviewing and making recommendations to the AANA Board of Directors in regard to all outstanding resolutions. Member comments were solicited via the member's only side of the AANA website. The board reviewed the recommendations from the Resolutions Committee at the open session board meeting at the MYA and a resolution has been proposed to terminate the majority of the resolutions. The final recommendations will be presented for a vote to the membership at the Annual Meeting in Seattle in August. Any member who wishes to discuss any previous resolution will have the opportunity to request this at the business meeting.

At the January board meeting the board considered a proposal from the American Nurses Association (ANA) to offer affiliate membership to AANA members. After much discussion, it was moved that the AANA President appoint a board task force to further research this proposal and to present a report at the Mid Year Assembly Board of Directors Meeting. An AANA survey was sent to AANA members asking for their input on this issue. About 10 percent of the members surveyed responded. An update was given to the members present at the MYA. The results of the survey will be shared with the AANA members on the member's only side of the website in the very near future. The AANA Board of Directors will continue to study the issue of AANA/ANA relationship.

At the board meeting at the Midyear Assembly meeting the AANA Board of Directors voted to accept the following recommendations from the Nominating Committee:

1. That the AANA Board of Directors monitor and evaluate the use of the Online Candidate Forum this year and consider discontinuing its use in the future if there is minimal member participation consistent with last year.
2. That the AANA Board of Directors monitor the use by members of the video-recorded presentations of Candidates' speeches on the AANA website this year and consider the value of continuing with this practice in the future based on membership utilization and return on investment.

The board also voted to make a change in which paper ballots are sent to voting members of the AANA. A paper ballot will be sent to those members eligible to vote only if requested in that format. Otherwise the ballot will be sent electronically. An email will go out to all members that have an email address on file asking the member whether they prefer to vote electronically or if they prefer a paper ballot. If a member chooses not to respond to the email, the member will receive the ballot electronically. Members without an email address on file will receive a paper ballot.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Region 4 Director. Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. My email address is dennisbless@yahoo.com.