



American Nurses Association-Maine

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RESOLUTION

TITLE: PEER ASSISTANCE

WHEREAS,

The American Nurses Association, 2002 House of Delegates unanimously voted to:

1. Support efforts to educate society and the profession on addiction and psychiatric illness as diseases for which society and registered nurses are at risk,
2. Seek to preserve the current and future workforce by promoting awareness of impaired practice, its prevalence, management and implications for public safety and well-being,
3. Promote member and affiliate actions which encourage the development and use of alternatives to discipline for health professionals in all states,
4. Encourage the development of peer assistance programs by state nurses associations, independently or collaboratively with other disciplines,
5. Collaborate with nursing education organizations and the National Student Nurses Association to increase awareness of the health risks and patient safety risks associated with untreated addiction and psychiatric illness, and
6. Collaborate with nursing education organizations, the National Student Nurses Association, and state nurses associations to expand provision of peer assistance in all states to include professional nursing students(ANA), and

WHEREAS,

Nurses constitute the largest single group of health care workers, and the healthcare system needs as many nurses to be healthy, productive participants in the health care system, and

WHEREAS,

As many as 10% or more of nurses are afflicted with substance abuse, addiction or mental health problems which influence their health, self-esteem, licensure, productivity and ability to practice safely, and

WHEREAS,

Nurses are both legally and ethically obligated to pursue self-regulation, principally to protect the public from harm, and nurses are also ethically bound to protect and help maintain the dignity of their colleagues by offering effective care for any of those colleagues who may have or develop a problem with substance abuse, addiction or mental illness during their professional careers. (IntNSA), and

WHEREAS,

There is a need to identify the elements of effective care for nurses who have a problem with addiction or mental illness in order to promote their timely and safe reentry into practice and to prevent relapse. (IntNSA),

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION-MAINE:

Will establish a MULTI-ORGANIZATIONAL TASK FORCE to explore the NEEDS of impaired colleagues in the State of Maine, and will:

1. Explore the feasibility of establishment of:
 - a. A COUNCIL ON ADDICTION AND IMPAIRED PRACTICE,
 - b. A PEER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM and
 - c. A REHABILITATION PROGRAM as an ALTERNATIVE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION,
2. Evaluate the EDUCATIONAL NEEDS of student nurses, nurses, educators and managers of nurses related to addiction and impaired practice and delineate recommended educational content for each group, and
3. Submit quarterly progress reports to the ANA-MAINE Board of Directors.

REFERENCES:

1. American Nurses Association House of Delegates 2002, Resolutions.
2. International Nurses Society on Addictions (IntNSA) , Position papers on: Peer Assistance, Educating Nurses on Addiction, and Addictive Disorders Among Nurses and Nursing Students in Academic Settings.

SPONSORED BY:

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ANA-MAINE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: E. Connolly (Scarborough), C. Harriman (Bangor), S. Henderson (South Portland), J. L'Heureux (Brunswick), J. Niemczura (Ellsworth), M. Ogonowski (Franklin), N. Byrne Vincent (South Portland).

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The ANA-MAINE Membership shall empower the Board of Directors to release to each national and state nursing organization and to the general media a supportive statement announcing and affirming this resolution.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Cost of clerical support, postage and news releases.

ADOPTED: 10/05/2002