

## Policy-Making Opportunities Increase for Nurse Practitioner Leaders



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President Kennedy is noted for saying, “Ask not what your country can do for you—but what you can do for your country.” Now is the time for NPs to ask the same thing. There are increasing opportunities for NPs to move into policy-making roles and assist in the creation of policies that will be fair to NPs and all healthcare providers.

Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, FAAN, a former lobbyist for ACNM, is the administrator for the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA). As a specialist particularly in rural health problems and initiatives, she is well positioned to keep an eye open for policy that affects NPs and nurse midwives. Reportedly, she has been enthusiastic about the positive and enlightened support of advanced nurse practitioners, evidenced by the White House. HRSA is also recruiting for RNs/APNs with master’s or doctorate degrees to fill policy-related positions charged with implementing aspects of the newly passed healthcare reform law. Please spread the word that HRSA is recruiting health professionals. Typically, nurses do not step up and respond to these calls, so it would be nice to see NPs included.

Recently we have seen a variety of other nurses move into leadership positions. Louise Kaplan, PhD, NP, left her faculty position at Washington State University and accepted a job as a senior policy fellow for practice and policy in the Department of Nursing Practice and Policy at the American Nurses Association (ANA). As an NP, Louise has critical knowledge and research skills that should benefit both nursing and NPs.

Some time ago, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) announced the appointment of Susan B. Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN, as senior advisor to RWJF for nursing. In announcing Hassmiller’s new position, the RWJF press release reports that this new position “reflects the centrality of nursing across the spectrum of RWJF programs and will integrate and connect the Foundation’s extensive nursing programs to promote broader and more lasting impact on the nursing field and on public health and healthcare.” As senior advisor for nursing, Hassmiller has the opportunity to lead and advise the Foundation’s efforts to develop strategies to address the nurse and nurse faculty shortages and create safer, higher quality care for patients and programs designed to improve the nation’s health. As part of her role, Hassmiller will also provide advice on all Foundation nursing programs and serve as a partner and liaison to the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA), a Washington-based joint project of the Foundation, AARP, and the AARP Foundation.

Hassmiller’s efforts with the CCNA will be augmented by the inclusion of NP Andrea Brassard, whom AARP hired to represent the organization with this group. AARP has emerged as a strong public supporter of broader utilization of NPs.

This is a time of rich opportunity for NPs. It is expected that NP leadership in policy-making programs should help shape a more equitable practice environment for the future.

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