March 30, 2011

Representative Louise Slaughter
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Slaughter,

I am writing on behalf of the American Nurses Association (ANA) to express our support of H.R. 965, *The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2011*. Founded in 1886, ANA is the only full-service national association representing Registered Nurses. Through our 54 constituent member associations, we represent registered nurses across the nation of all educational preparation and in all practice settings. ANA believes strongly that H.R. 965, which calls for a phased elimination of the non-therapeutic use of critical antimicrobial animal drugs in food-producing animals, will lower the burden of human anti-microbial resistance.

Antibiotic-resistant disease is a growing problem in the United States, particularly for the aged, children, those who have recently undergone surgery, and those with compromised immune systems. This resistance to antibiotics threatens nurses’ ability to successfully treat patients with bacterial infections, posing a risk to the patients, nurses and their families\(^1\).

Mounting evidence shows that extensive use of non-therapeutic antibiotics in animal agriculture is an important contributor to this problem. An estimated 80 percent of antibiotics and related drugs used in this country are fed to farm animals for non-therapeutic purposes such as growth promotion and prevention of disease. Nearly half of these antibiotics are identical or closely related to important human medicines.

This legislation establishes a two-year phase out of non-therapeutic uses of medically important antibiotics in livestock and poultry, unless the FDA concludes that such use does not contribute to antibiotic resistance affecting humans. The bill requires producers of antibiotics for livestock and poultry to provide the FDA with data on the quantities sold, so that antibiotic use in agriculture can be tracked. Antibiotics will continue to be used to treat sick animals and for non-routine disease prevention.

The American Nurses Association thanks you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you in support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Rose Gonzalez, MPS, RN
Director, Government Affairs

\(^1\)“Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria on the Rise,” *American Journal of Nursing,* March, 2002 -Volume 102, Issue 3