

**American Nurses Association
2006 House of Delegates**

Resolution

Nursing Practice, Chemical Exposure and Right-to-Know

WHEREAS, in 1983, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration's (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard established the right-to-know about the potential hazards, including the health threats posed by the chemicals in the nation's workplaces, and now, over 20 years later, most workers, including nurses and other healthcare workers, still do not have sufficient knowledge about the health risks associated with the chemicals that they use or are exposed to in the workplace, and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has measured select toxic chemicals found in the urine and blood samples of Americans finding significant human body burdens of dioxins, heavy metals, pesticides, phthalates and other chemicals, and

WHEREAS, the Louisville Charter for Safer Chemicals recognizes the current chemical burden of individuals is unprecedented in human history; calls for immediate action in reforming the nation's chemicals policy; establishes as a priority the need to phase out the most dangerous chemicals in the environment, develop safer alternatives, and protect high-risk communities; and supports giving the public and workers the full right-to-know about chemical hazards and implementing immediate intervention when workers and communities are exposed to levels of chemicals that pose a health hazard; and

WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) healthcare workers report a higher rate of work-related injuries and illnesses greater than workers in such hazardous occupations as farming, mining, construction and manufacturing, and

WHEREAS, according to the National Academy of Science (NAS) and Institute of Medicine (IOM), there is a current trend in the federal government to reduce access to information regarding potentially hazardous chemicals in the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine has recommended that environmental health principles be integrated into nursing education, practice, research, advocacy and policy development, and

WHEREAS, the American Nurses Association (ANA) is an essential partner in Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) and Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E), two organizations that are actively engaged in eliminating persistent bioaccumulative toxins, mercury and other toxic products from health care, educating the nation about chemical hazards, utilizing safer alternatives and keeping our communities and workplaces safe, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the American Nurses Association advocates a course of action both nationally and globally and through the nationwide state legislative agenda that reduces the use of toxic chemicals requiring that less harmful chemicals be substituted whenever possible; supports labeling and full disclosure mechanisms; demands adequate information on the health effects of chemicals and chemicals in products before they are introduced on the market; creates more streamlined methods for chemicals to be removed from use; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association monitors national policies on chemical issues and meet with legislators informing them of what nurses and the nursing profession believe concerning the links between chemical exposures, a healthy environment and the public's health; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association supports research efforts in environmental health to better understand the relationship between health and the environment, especially in the area of toxicology and in vulnerable populations such as infants, children, pregnant women, and the elderly, looking at interactions when more than one chemical exposure occurs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association advances an enhanced organizational initiative to educate nurses about the potentially harmful chemicals that are typically used in health care settings including currently available safer products for substitution; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association advocates the integration of environmental health principles into nursing education, practice, research, advocacy and policy development, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association endorses efforts to ensure that nurses have full access to information and the right-to-know about the potentially hazardous chemicals to which nurses, other healthcare workers, patients, and communities in general are exposed, and be it further

RESOLVED, that ANA supports industry research that results in the development of safe cosmetics and personal care products.

RESOLVED, that the ANA endorse and sign on to the "National Campaign for Safe Cosmetics" and encourages CMAs to do the same in order to educate nurses and the public to take precautions when using cosmetics and personal care products, and to urge United States cosmetic companies to sign a compact to remove untested chemicals from cosmetics by 2010.