EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: In 2010 the Tri-Council for Nursing stated: “Current health care reform initiatives call for a nursing workforce that integrates evidence-based clinical knowledge and research with effective communication and leadership skills. These competencies require increased education at all levels. At this tipping point for the nursing profession, action is needed now to put in place strategies to build a stronger nursing workforce. Without a more educated nursing workforce, the nation's health will be further at risk.” State nursing stakeholders must come together to promote educational advancement for registered nurses.

RESOLVED: That the Georgia Nurses Association will:
1. Conduct a survey on nurses’ support for educational advancement for ADN & diploma nurse graduates.
2. Convene all stakeholders to begin a dialogue on BSN in 10 for educational advancement.
3. Develop time line for implementation of a process to transition future ADN and diploma educated nurses to the BSN within 10 years of graduation.
4. Educate the public on the benefits of having a BSN-educated workforce providing care.
5. Develop a fact sheet of benefits for the ADN or diploma nurse to obtain the BSN.

BACKGROUND: The 2008 ANA House of Delegates RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association support initiatives to require registered nurses (RNs) to obtain a baccalaureate degree in nursing within ten years after initial licensure, exempting (grand-parenting) those individuals who are licensed or enrolled as a student in a nursing program at the time legislation is enacted; and be it further RESOLVED, that the American Nurses Association advocates for and promotes legislative and educational activities that support advanced education in nursing. ANA’s efforts to influence nursing education date back to 1965. (ANA, Nursing Education, retrieved 9/16/11)

Nurses have a vital role to play in a health care environment that is increasingly complex and populated by other health care professionals who have baccalaureate degrees or other advanced educational degrees. If the nursing profession is to have equal voice in the health care arena, it must support educational advancement for the professional registered nurse. Also, as health care continues to evolve and the demands of nursing require the advanced level of critical thinking that is achieved at the BSN level and above, the profession must develop a well-articulated process for nurses to advance their education.

The ANA has supported the BSN in Ten concept since 2000. With the ANA House of Delegates’ 2008 position to support requirements for RNs to obtain a baccalaureate degree within ten years of initial licensure, the time is now for state nurses associations to convene nursing stakeholders in order to generate discussion, offer education and develop plans toward educational advancement for RNs.
In 2010 The Institute of Medicine (IOM) in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation published “The Future of Nursing-Leading Change, Advancing Health”. This report explores how nurses’ roles, responsibilities, and education must change to meet the increased demand for care that will be created by health care reform and to advance improvements in America's complex health care system. One recommendation in the report is specific to advancing nursing education: “Increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80% by 2020.” Action is underway in many states to develop strategies to meet this recommendation: a number of ADN programs are being expanded to baccalaureate programs, legislation is proposed in some states to require “BSN in Ten” and many hospitals are now preferentially hiring baccalaureate graduates.

CONCLUSION: The increasingly complex health care system requires a well educated nursing workforce. In line with the Tri-Council’s educational advancement position and the IOM Future of Nursing report, now is the time to promote efforts for future graduates of ADN and diploma nursing programs to advance their education.

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