

MEMORANDUM

To: Francis Collins, MD, PhD, Director, National Institutes of Health
Cc: Patricia Grady, PhD, RN, FAAN, Director, National Institute for Nursing Research
From: Margaret Heitkemper PhD, RN, FAAN, Chair, Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science
Re: Priorities for Nursing Research

Introduction to the Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science (CANS)

The Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science (CANS) is the research facilitation arm of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). Formed in 2000 with the mission of “Better Health through Nursing Science,” CANS provides a strong voice for nursing science at the national and international levels; supports the development, conduct and utilization of nursing science; and facilitates life-long learning opportunities for nursing scientists. CANS is an open membership organization welcoming all nursing scientists and supporters of nursing research. CANS membership now includes approximately 600 members some of which are international. CANS is directed by a Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from the four regional nursing research societies, and the American Nurses Foundation and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society. A member of the AAN Board acts as a liaison to the Academy the NINR is also represented with a non-voting member. Additionally, the chair of the Steering Committee is appointed by the Academy Board of Directors.

The Council’s umbrella organization the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) serves the public and the nursing profession by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. The Academy’s 1,500 members - known as Fellows - are nursing's most accomplished leaders in education, management, practice and research. They have been recognized for their extraordinary nursing careers and are among the nation's most highly-educated citizens; more than 80 percent hold doctoral degrees, and the rest have completed masters programs. Sixty-four percent of the Fellowship work in academic settings, 30 percent work in service and practice settings, and about 3 percent work in state and federal government agencies. The Academy is governed by a 10-member Board of Directors, elected by the Fellows. It was founded in 1973 under the aegis of the American Nurses Association (ANA) and is now an independent affiliate of the ANA.

CANS’ Priorities

CANS supports the advancement of nursing science that will improve the practice of the 2.9 million American nurses and patient care outcomes. Both Clinical and Translational research is needed to accomplish this goal, as is the preparation of nurse scientists. Our priorities include:

- Building the science that supports self management and self care, particularly as it relates to chronic illness, and palliative and end of life care;
- Expanding the scientific bases supporting nursing interventions in chronic illnesses;
- Expanding the use of prevention and health promotion strategies where research has shown to be effective;
- Eliminating disparities in health outcomes that are associated with age, gender, socioeconomic status or racial/ethnic background;
- Increasing the number and diversity of nurses entering careers in research;
- Increasing the number of well qualified nurse scientists through pre- and post- graduate training opportunities within interdisciplinary science communities;
- Promoting the engagement of nurse scientists within the CTSA structures, and particularly to promote the use of evidence in nursing practice.
- Increasing communication with NIH and AHRQ to promote collaboration in the development of scientific findings that improve health.

Recommendations for NIH

- Maintain the structure of and expand the research funding for the NINR, which is uniquely dedicated to supporting science in nursing and most closely associated with funding science about caring for people and their families in health and illness;
- Identify NINR as the lead NIH agency for research on symptom management;
- Further support the work of NINR in the area of end of life care;
- Continue to support and expand the funding of Centers that address priority areas within nursing science;
- Support the training of new scientists in nursing, as well as mid-career scientists; and
- Promote the detailed and ongoing analysis of NIH funded research on the development of evidence that improves patient care outcomes.