

### ANA: Report from Minneapolis

*Blakeney says 'we are fighting for our very lives.'*

Citing a major threat that could dismantle the ANA, President Barbara Blakeney urged delegates at this year's house of delegates in Minneapolis in June to pass resolutions that would strengthen the organization.

According to Blakeney, "irrefutable evidence of a credible threat to the association" comes on the heels of last year's house, when the ANA underwent extensive reorganization (see *AJN Reports*, August 2003).

Blakeney, who was reelected president of the association at this year's house, was referring to the California Nurses Association (CNA), formerly affiliated with the ANA, that is mounting an aggressive campaign to get nurses throughout the country to join CNA-affiliated unions. The CNA split from the ANA in 1995.

"It is the expressed goal of the CNA to encourage as many states as possible to leave the ANA," Blakeney told the delegates. "There is no bigger challenge we face than stopping the CNA's effort to destroy and replace ANA as the voice of nursing."

Urging the approximately 600 members of the house of delegates to vote in favor of an automatic dues "escalator" (which will allow the ANA to raise dues in keeping with changes in the Consumer Price Index until 2010), Blakeney said a dues increase, designed to fund programs that will benefit the constituent member associations (CMAs), was essential to strengthen the association.

The dues increase was approved by more than 70% of the members. Delegates from small CMAs were vocal, however, about their fears of losing members because of the increase.

Also, the ANA now stipulates that a CMA will be responsible for dues payments unless two-thirds of its members vote to disaffiliate.

#### RESOLUTIONS PASSED

Other actions by the house of delegates included passing resolutions that direct the ANA

- to encourage initiatives for modifying work environments that are based on the Institute of Medicine's report *Keeping Patients Safe: Transforming the Work Environment for Nurses*.
- to oppose political or ideological interference in scientific inquiry and research.
- to develop a model of "clinical privileging" that supports the professional autonomy of advanced practice nurses.
- to urge meat and poultry producers to stop the nontherapeutic use of antibiotics.
- to condemn the incarceration and death sentences of Bulgarian nurses by the Libyan government.

#### THE PRESENCE OF POLITICS

The November presidential election was a major focus of the meeting, as was fund raising to support the ANA-endorsed Democratic candidate Senator John Kerry (D-MA). During the opening session, Kerry phoned into the meeting, greeted atten-



▲ U.S. surgeon general Richard Carmona addressed the ANA convention, explaining his focus on preparedness, prevention, and health disparities.

dees, reiterated his support for nurses, and discussed his ideas "for building a stronger America that works for everybody." Kerry received a standing ovation.

U.S. surgeon general Richard Carmona, a former nurse, was a keynote speaker and told nurses "we must become a nation that embraces prevention and moves away from our treatment-oriented system." Carmona said during his tenure he will focus on prevention, preparedness, and elimination of health disparities, all areas in which nurses' involvement would be key.

#### HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Honors went to Luther Christman and Imogene King, who were inducted into the ANA Hall of Fame. Christman was recognized for creating the practitioner-teacher role while dean at Rush University College of Nursing in Chicago (which he also founded). King was acknowledged for her many contributions to advancing nursing theory and practice. —Maureen Shawn Kennedy, MA, RN, news director

### Declaration of Independence

*The UAN adopts a constitution.*

The National Labor Assembly (NLA) of the United American Nurses (UAN), the independent labor union affiliated with the ANA and a member of the AFL-CIO, made history by passing its first constitution in Minneapolis on June 24. New York delegate Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez was a member of the committee that drafted the constitution. She told delegates that the UAN's aim was to be "the premier union for nurses."

President Cheryl Johnson described the UAN's journey, from its beginnings in 1998 to becoming the largest organization devoted to collective bargaining for nurses. She noted that the vast majority of nurses don't belong to unions, despite the fact that unionized nurses earn more than nonunion nurses and are less likely to face mandatory overtime in their workplaces. Johnson urged the NLA delegates to "stand up and talk" to citizens



▲ Ann Converso (left), vice president, and Cheryl Johnson, president of the United American Nurses, celebrate after the announcement of their reelection at the June meeting.

about the "unacceptable risks they face in the health care system" because of unsafe staffing and poor working conditions.

**Hawaii chaos.** Many participants made repeated reference to a situation in Hawaii where, they claim, the California Nurses Association has infiltrated the Hawaii Nurses Association (HNA) and its collective bargaining organization and has attempted to pressure the association to leave the ANA as part of a multi-state campaign to take over collective bargaining organizations. In July, however, the HNA house of delegates voted overwhelmingly against disaffiliating from the ANA (eight in favor, 134 against, eight abstentions).

**Strike support.** The NLA delegates contributed more than \$1,200, and the UAN contributed \$5,000 to support striking nurses at Akron General Medical Center in Ohio. The strike began a week before the convention and ended shortly thereafter. —Diana J. Mason, PhD, RN, FAAN, editor-in-chief ▼

### A Banner Year

*The Center for American Nurses notes achievements.*

In its first year of independence, the Center for American Nurses (CAN), the workplace advocacy group representing more than 48,000 nonunion nurses, focused on getting organized and preparing resources for its 37 constituent member groups to help nurses become their own advocates in the workplace.

Clair Jordan, outgoing president, noted that the center "helps the individual to become empowered in the workplace as opposed to giving that power away to a labor organization." She acknowledged that while there is dialogue with the United American Nurses, ANA's union affiliate, there is no collaboration on common issues. "We spent a year separating out our differences and establishing ourselves," she said. "It will take some time to see where we are together on issues."

**The aging workforce.** A major focus for the CAN is its "Mature Experienced Nurse" initiative to examine and improve the work environment so that older nurses can continue to work safely. The center conducted an online survey of older nurses and received more than 3,000 responses. Jordan noted that while older, more experienced nurses are less likely than younger nurses to sustain injuries, they recover from injury less quickly.

Debbie Hatmaker, newly elected president of the CAN, said she will build on this first year's work and continue "to establish an identity recognized by members and nonmembers alike." For more information go to [www.centerforamericannurses.org](http://www.centerforamericannurses.org). —Maureen Shawn Kennedy, MA, RN, news director



▲ Debbie Hatmaker (left), newly elected president of the Center for American Nurses, presents a plaque to outgoing president Clair Jordan.

### Got News?

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