

## Governor Corzine Signs New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing Legislation:

### S-621/A-383 is Law

***This new legislation marks a major milestone for the Center by providing the sustainable funding required to address effectively the many nursing workforce issues affecting the State.***

Governor Corzine signed S-621/A-383 (Vitale, Weinberg/Diegan) into law on April 27, 2009. This new law dedicates a portion of nurse licensing fees to support the New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing (The Center), as well as extending the term of office for board members to three years from the current two year terms.

Specifically, the new law provides that an amount equal to five percent of the initial and renewal licensing fees charged by the New Jersey Board of Nursing for professional and practical nurses (pursuant to N.J.A.C.13:37-5.5) is to be dedicated to funding, and annually appropriated to, the Center. The legislation also authorizes, if necessary, the Board of Nursing to revise nurse licensing fees, by regulation, to account for its loss of revenue as a result of the dedication of funding to the Center.

The Division of Consumer Affairs provided data that indicated as of June 30, 2007 there were 132,749 licenses, 127,925 active and 4,824 paid inactive, which would be affected by this bill. Of these licenses, Licensed Practical Nurses made up 21,678 licenses (20,946 active and 732 paid inactive) and Registered Professional Nurses made up 111,071 licenses (106,979 active and 4,092 paid inactive). These licenses are renewed biennially. As of March 2006, the initial license and license renewal fee are \$120 and an inactive license fee is \$60. According to this legislation, five percent of these license fees would be dedicated to the Center.

The Center marked its seventh year of serving New Jersey's nursing community in 2009. From the beginning, this organization has focused on measuring, monitoring, and forecasting the supply and demand of nurses in New Jersey, while providing a ready source for current issues related to nurses and the State. The Center has had many accomplishments since its founding. Such milestones include the publishing of a new articulation model for New Jersey: LPN to RN and RN to BSN. This model was endorsed by all New Jersey nursing schools. Additionally, the Center has published and distributed the New Jersey Competency-Based Nursing Practice model, and has tested the reliability of the State's nurse demand model by comparing forecasts with actual RN/LPN demand data for 1998 and 2000.

In 2007, the Center's own Linda Flynn, Ph.D., RN published "The State of the Nursing Workforce in New Jersey: Findings from a Statewide Survey of Registered Nurses," which successfully highlighted the current issues affecting the State's nurses. The Center has also been involved in the Newark community with its "I Care About Nursing" (I CAN) community nurse volunteer program. Officially under the oversight of the Center since 2007, I CAN has exposed hundreds of Newark elementary school children to the richness of the nursing field, while emphasizing proper hygiene.

Established by legislation (P.L.2002, c.116), the Center is currently funded by a public/private funding partnership between the State of New Jersey and RWJF. The Center serves as a research and development organization to provide objective information about the nursing workforce in New Jersey. It aims to develop and implement common goals in the state's nursing education and practice, through collaboration and consensus. NJCCN is located in the College of Nursing on the Newark Campus of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.