

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Michael

V. Haire

Central Care Nurse

800-809-2273
x531

- needs beard + white photo 3x5
- everything looks fine or bigger
- I've issue
- will send gallery in Feb.

Karen

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

CRITICAL CARE NURSE

DRAFT

I am delighted to have this opportunity to contribute to *Critical Care Nurse*. I have tremendous respect for nurses -- for the skills, commitment, and compassion you bring to your work. This admiration, inspired in part by my mother-in-law, Virginia Kelley, who was a nurse for many years, has been reinforced again and again by the dedicated nurses I have met all over our country. Frequently, I find that the critical care nurses I encounter are worried about their job security in the changing health care environment and are dismayed by the burdensome administrative requirements they face. Since the beginning of the Clinton Administration's health reform effort, we have shared these concerns.

Job Security

The President and I believe in the strong relationship between nursing care and patient welfare. The President's health care reform plan, formulated with the input of many registered nurses, protected patients by requiring health insurance plans to compete for subscribers on the basis of *quality* as well as cost. By providing comprehensive insurance coverage to all Americans and emphasizing relatively inexpensive primary and preventive care, the President's plan controlled the runaway health care costs that today compel hospitals to "economize" by laying off nurses. And to address the needs of critical care professionals in light of the shift in emphasis away from preventable acute care, the President's plan established a National Institute for Health Care Workforce Development and provided

retraining programs for experienced nurses.

Although Congress did not pass health reform legislation last year, the President and his Administration remain committed to our nation's health care professionals and their patients. The Division of Nursing of the Public Health Service continues to track issues in the nursing workforce, particularly as they relate to preparing for the future. The Division recently contracted with the Institute of Medicine to determine whether current nursing staff levels should be increased to improve quality of patient care and reduce the incidence of work-related stress and injury among nurses. We are pleased that a representative of the AACN is a member of the liaison committee involved in this study.

Paperwork

Nurses should be able to put patients ahead of paperwork. Today, however, administrative burdens force nurses to spend an average of one-third of their time on paperwork. The President's reform plan addressed this problem by establishing a uniform claims form, promoting the computerization of medical records, and providing a uniform comprehensive benefits package to all Americans..

Currently, the Administration is working to identify the barriers that have hindered the development of a computer-based patient records system and to resolve these critical technological issues. An interagency working group in the White House Information Infrastructure Task Force is charged with helping to design and use the Administration's emerging National Information Infrastructure to improve the health of all Americans.

Research that will facilitate the computerization of medical records is ongoing at the Departments of Defense, Commerce, and Health and Human Services, and at the Veterans Administration. The creation of computer-based patient records systems promises to improve the quality and reduce the cost of care by lightening nurses' bureaucratic load and freeing them to spend more time with their patients.

Although we are proud of the work the Administration has done in the absence of reform legislation, the President and I remain committed to working to improve our nation's health care system through meaningful health care reform. Today, too many Americans cannot obtain the high quality affordable care they need, and at the same time, skyrocketing health care costs are imperiling our nation's economic future. Although America's health care system is among the world's finest -- thanks in large part to outstanding nursing care -- the failings of the current regime too often undermine your work and everything else that is best about our system. You and your patients deserve better.



November 8, 1994

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF CRITICAL CARE NURSES

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President-elect

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Lisa Caputo
Press Secretary
Office of the First Lady
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Caputo:

I received the fax of the Endnote piece submitted for consideration by you on behalf of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In a letter dated March 29, 1994, to Karen Finney, I spelled out two specific areas Mrs. Clinton could address that would be of interest to our readership of nearly 100,000 critical care nurses. Those two areas were as follows:

- There is a grave level of concern among critical care nurses about their *job security*, as many hospitals are cutting costs, especially nursing positions, in the face of anticipated systemic capitation. Critical care nurses are quite eager to hear about *the level of awareness within the Administration* regarding this trend, and what *provisions are being built into healthcare reform to retrain/redeploy critical care nurses* to other areas of the healthcare distribution system to meet patient needs, in the face of an anticipated demphasis on healthcare delivery in an acute care setting.
- Nurses are also quite concerned about balancing their concerns for patient-driven care against increasing demands on their time to document and fulfill *bureaucratic requirements*—demands that cut directly into the time they can spend providing quality care and teaching patients and families. What assurances do they have—in whatever setting they practice—that they will have *quality time to spend with their patients* rather than another layer of red tape?

These points were touched on briefly in the piece you submitted. However, critical care nurses are looking for solid, viable solutions. They are asking for specific solutions from the nation's leadership—acknowledgment of the problem and confirmation of the value critical care has in the healthcare reform agenda. The move toward managed care—given inertia by healthcare reform—is causing downsizing of hospital staff, most often in the place least able to withstand downsizing: critical care nursing staff.

If you are able to rework the article to address these concerns, we would be very interested in publishing it in the next available issue. If you have questions or would like specific line edit suggestions, please call me.

Sincerely,

Michael Villaire
Managing Editor
Critical Care Nurse

OK to send
4/3/95

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

CRITICAL CARE NURSE

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Outstanding nursing care is a large part of what makes America's health care system the finest in the world. Too often, however, the failings of the current system undermine your work and everything else that is best about our system. The President will continue to fight for health care reform -- not only because too many Americans cannot get the high quality, affordable health care they need, but because skyrocketing health care costs and mounting burdens on health care professionals are imperiling our nation's economic future.

Today, there are more than 39 million Americans without health insurance -- including nearly 10 million children -- and millions more who are underinsured. Millions of Americans who are shut out of our current health care system never have the opportunity to benefit from your skills and hard work or to receive your compassion and care.

I have spent the better part of the last 20 months travelling around this country listening to people's stories. One grandparent told me about a child running a high fever who, after being turned away from two hospital emergency rooms because his family did not have insurance, later died of meningitis. The child's cousin was hospitalized for the same

disease and lived. The difference was that one family had insurance.

As critical care nurses, you have not only heard these families' stories, but you are witnesses as they evolve. Given the work you do every day, you understand better than most why we cannot walk away from the issue of health care reform now.

During my travels, I have also learned a great deal from the health care professionals I have met. Many have told me that their hospitals have begun to "economize" by laying off nurses -- putting the high quality of care that their patients now receive at risk. In addition, burdensome administrative requirements force nurses to spend an average of one-third of their time on paperwork. You and your patients deserve better. America's health care system must put patients ahead of paperwork.

As you know, Congress was unable to act on health care reform legislation during the last session. Well-financed special interests have fought for sixty years to prevent health care reform, and this year they waged an unprecedented battle. The President and I, however, are pleased that we have come further than ever before in the effort to give health security to American families and to preserve the high quality health care that our nation's doctors and nurses deliver today. We are committed to continuing the fight.

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25 years

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Office of the First Lady
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Washington, D.C. 20500

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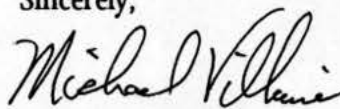
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July 13, 1995

**Karen Finney
Deputy Press Secretary
Office of the First Lady
The White House
Washington, DC 20500**

Dear Ms Finney:

In looking through my files I realize I failed to send you a copy of the Endnote piece written for Critical Care Nurse by Mrs. Clinton. I'm enclosing a few copies of that issue for your files.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your assistance.

Please also pass along our thanks to Mrs. Clinton for providing such a thoughtful opinion article. Although the healthcare reform debate has become a partisan issue, the articulation of the administration's stance toward critical care nurses is greatly appreciated as it continues to stimulate discussion among our readership.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Michael Villaire
Managing Editor
Critical Care Nurse**