



POSITION STATEMENT

2012-2013 Key Public Policy Issues

As the national association for occupational and environmental health nurses, the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc. (AAOHN) is actively involved in federal and state legislative, regulatory, and public policy efforts that impact occupational and environmental health. Occupational and environmental health nurses (OHNs) both support and advocate for legislation and workplace policies that affect the health and safety of workers and public health in general.

Through a number of strategies, AAOHN takes action on emerging issues in occupational and environmental health and safety, professional practice, and public policy. For the 2012 AAOHN Public Policy Platform, four priority areas have been identified that reflect global and domestic trends, threats, and opportunities related to the profession, access and quality of health care, and economic stability and global competitiveness of the United States (US). These priority areas are:

- ✧ Health Care System Transition
- ✧ Public Health and Environments
- ✧ Health, Environmental, and Safety Policy
- ✧ Professional Practice

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM TRANSITION

One dimension of an individual's overall health is being healthy at work. As the US health care system goes through transition, AAOHN advocates for efforts that will help America become the "healthiest nation" through:

- ✧ Quality health care that is accessible and affordable for all citizens,
- ✧ Programs that reduce or eliminate preventable conditions,
- ✧ Efforts that improve individuals' ability to make informed choices, and
- ✧ Removal of barriers to health care access.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTS

The goal of public health is to assure conditions in which people can be healthy where they live, work, and play. AAOHN supports efforts to improve public and environmental health through:

- ✧ Participation in strengthening the nation's public health system,
- ✧ Promotion of adequate funding and appropriations for public health agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
- ✧ Elimination of environmental risk factors such as poor air quality, noise pollution, improper waste disposal, and contaminated water supply,
- ✧ Identification of chemicals that are a threat to health and safe work practices to protect citizens from chemical exposure, and
- ✧ Participation of OHNs and employers in community disaster preparedness.

WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Because Americans spend much of their time at work, worker health, and environmental and safety policies, are imperative. Occupational and environmental health nurses serve as advocates for workers and promote sound worker health and safety policies. AAOHN supports efforts that improve worker health and safety through:

- ✧ Collaborating with agencies such as the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH),
- ✧ Responding to petitions for rulemaking,
- ✧ Commenting on proposed legislation,
- ✧ Participating on committees that provide recommendations to legislators, and
- ✧ Advising policy-making regarding work benefits, health, environmental, wellness, and safety.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

AAOHN supports occupational and environmental health nursing practice through advocacy efforts that emphasize the value of OHNs to employers, employees, government, and other stakeholders. AAOHN continuously strives to elevate the profession; build visibility for OHNs; and demonstrate how OHNs promote, protect, and restore worker health within the context of a safe and healthy work environment. AAOHN supports the profession by:

- ✧ Collaborating with other professional nursing and occupational health, environmental, and safety organizations to promote the nursing profession,
- ✧ Encouraging all OHNs to advance their practice through continuing education, academic degrees, and/or certification,
- ✧ Creating evidence-based best practices, and
- ✧ Informing employers, governments, and other stakeholders of the value of OHNs.

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