

**Illinois Coalition for Nursing Resources
c/o Nancy C. Krier, RN, MSN
3N437 Norris Avenue
West Chicago, IL 60185**

January 19, 2001

Carl Getto, M.D., Chair
Governor's Task Force on Medical Errors
c/o Michelle Gentry-Wiseman
Illinois Department of Public Health
535 West Jefferson- 5th Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Subject: Comments to Governor's Task Force on Medical Errors

Dear Dr. Getto:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Governor's Task Force on Medical Errors. We are the Illinois Coalition for Nursing Resources (ICNR), a newly formed group focusing on the nursing shortage. Our membership is broad and represents hospital and provider organizations, deans and directors in nursing education, and various nursing professional organizations and individuals. (See attached membership list.) *Our mission is to assure that the state of Illinois has the nursing resources necessary to meet the healthcare needs of Illinois. The ICNR will create and maintain a long-term program that provides for adequate numbers of nurses, promotes appropriate skill mix of nursing staff, and focuses on recruitment of individuals into the nursing profession. We will work to develop and maintain a supportive environment in health care to retain nurses in all aspects of patient care.*

It is our belief that most of the issues in the eight categories/ topic areas the Task Force is charged to discuss are directly related to the shortage of nurses in Illinois and across the rest of the country. We therefore urge you to recommend state support for resolving the shortage and invite you to join us in our efforts to accomplish our mission. We need to work together on improving the image of nursing in order to recruit more young professionals into the field. We must also find ways to retain our current nurses. We must do so if we are to continue to provide the best care possible and ensure patient safety for the people of Illinois.

As you know, there is a national patient safety movement underway which seeks to change the "blaming environment" in healthcare. Research supports a non-punitive environment, which promotes identification of errors and root cause analyses to prevent future errors. We need to provide enough well-prepared people to support that environment and seek better ways to deliver care. We support sharing of safe practices and models that work for improved quality. We are developing several initiatives to achieve these outcomes and invite you to join us as we work toward these ends.

We are very concerned about policy development regarding the identification and disposition of cases involving impaired professionals, those who are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. The nursing community has been working to improve the system addressing the treatment and rehabilitation of these valuable professionals who are ill. We do not

want to lose them, if possible. For that reason, we support a system that will help, not punish, them. Leonard A. Sherman, Director of the Department of Professional Regulation, has worked with us and has accepted our proposal, which was modeled after the system recommended by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. We ask that you consider this in your recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

We want to offer our assistance in all of your efforts and ask that you contact us through our coordinator, Nancy C. Krier. Ms. Krier can be reached at 630-231-0474, fax: 630-231-7101, or email: nkrier@ameritech.net.

Thank you again and we will look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Illinois Coalition for Nursing Resources

The Members of the Illinois Coalition for Nursing Resources

Attachment: Membership of the ICNR