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**NEWS RELEASE**



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**ANA ISSUES POLICY PAPER WITH GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
ALL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS WHO RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES,  
DISASTERS OR PANDEMICS**

*White Paper Makes Clear: ‘No Emergency Changes the Basic Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Competence or Values of the Professional’*

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – As a result of the American Nurses Association’s (ANA) effort to significantly engage registered nurses and the nursing profession in the association’s policy development process, today ANA released a timely policy paper “Adapting Standards of Care Under Extreme Conditions: Guidance for Professionals During Disasters, Pandemics, and Other Extreme Emergencies.”

“America’s nurses understand the difficult decisions that must be made during a disaster. We have to shift our clinical goals from making day to day decisions for the individual to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of people. This means that care decisions are about what can be done given the limited resources and extreme conditions at the time,” said President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR.

The policy document addresses individual health professionals who find themselves providing care during an extreme emergency when the usual resources – both human and material - may not be available. The paper’s guideline are based on critical “foundational” documents including emergency preparedness and response competencies expected of health professionals, scope and standards of care documents issued by professional organizations, such as the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses and a wide range of guidelines on care in emergencies produced by professional organizations,

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governmental agencies or specific institutions. Visitors to ANA's Web site, NursingWorld, can locate it through the following link

<http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/HealthcareandPolicyIssues/DPR/TheLawEthicsofDisasterResponse/AdaptingStandardsOfCare.aspx>.

In developing this policy paper, ANA held the first in a series of policy conferences, "Nursing Care in Life, Death and Disaster" in June 2007 – and convened a multidisciplinary expert panel to advise the association on the policy questions related to standards of care and to develop strategies that guide health professional's institutions and policy makers in challenging circumstances. All participants of the policy conference had an opportunity to review the document and provide significant feedback to the expert panel.

Key Recommendations:

- Registered nurses and other health professionals must prepare themselves and their families for potential emergencies, including the potential for the health professional to be away for extended periods during an emergency.
- Registered nurses and other health professionals must use their professional competence to provide the best care possible given the resources and physical conditions under which they are working.
- Health facilities and other practice sites must provide opportunities for professional decision-making about adapting standards in drills and exercises on a regular basis.
- Health facilities and other practice sites must conduct psychosocial needs assessment for those responding, and arrange for assistance if needed.
- Emergency response planners should ensure the health institutions and professionals are included in all planning for legal declarations of emergencies to assure that concerns about patient care guidelines and relevant regulations are considered.
- Emergency response planners should assist in developing plans to return to pre-event status as quickly and smoothly as reasonable.

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*The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.*