HFSA and AAHFN Joint Position Statement:
Advocating for a Full Scope of Nursing Practice and Leadership in Heart Failure

Briefing Note

Context:

- The Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA) and the American Association of Heart Failure Nurses (AAHFN) share a common mission to improve outcomes of patients with heart failure.
- Nurses and nurse practitioners are the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and constitute the second largest community of the HFSA.
- There are two major issues affecting the influence of nursing on the health of patients and families living with heart failure (among other health concerns) that have received recent attention in the press and in publications.
  - There are a number of historical, cultural, regulatory, and policy barriers to nursing scope-of-practice that limit nurses’ ability to fully contribute to the health of Americans.
  - Nurses need to be more active and accountable in the transformation of U.S. healthcare delivery.
- The HFSA Advocacy Committee and AAHFN Board of Directors have liaised to develop a joint position statement to advocate for nurses and nurse practitioners with respect to these two issues.

Evolution of the Position Statement (Sept 2011 through May 2012):

- The HFSA working group and advocacy committee at large generated several iterations of the position statement with strategic guidance from the AAHFN board of directors reviewed at monthly advocacy committee meetings.
- The group came to consensus on a balance between an advocacy statement and call to action and on neutral language to be inclusive of the contributions of other disciplines.
- The group came to consensus about minimizing the direct reference to, and omitting specific examples and recommendations of the Institute of Medicine report on the future of nursing. Instead, we opted to focus on aspects of nursing practice and leadership that have the greatest influence on the care of those with heart failure and are directly linked to our mission statements.

Two Tenets of the Position Statement:

- Advocate for the removal of scope-of-practice barriers for nurses to allow advanced practice nurses to practice to the full extent of their educational training.
- Call to action for nurses to become full partners in the redesign of healthcare through leadership roles in foundation and governmental organizations.

Pending Approval:

- HFSA executive council review in May 2012.
- Pending AAHFN approval of changes after HFSA executive council decision May 2012.

Dissemination:

- Position Statement Publication:
  - Journal of Cardiac Failure (the official journal of the HFSA)
  - Heart & Lung (the official journal of the AAHFN)
  - Other similar journals
- Liaise with HFSA and AAHFN publicity for additional dissemination opportunities.