

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Editor's note. The following letter, expressing the concerns of nurse editors over the American Nurses Association's (ANA's) decision to drop the *American Journal of Nursing (AJN)* as its official journal, was sent to the ANA president. The letter was developed in the list serve of the International Academy of Nurse Editors, where signers indicated their consent to publication. The letter is being published in multiple journals to maximize readers' knowledge about ANA's decision. Signers of the letter are expressing their own opinions and not necessarily those of the professional organizations with which their journals may be affiliated. For further information about ANA's decision, consult the ANA Web page at <http://nursingworld.org/anajournal>. For further information on the future of *AJN*, please read the eloquent "Publisher's Note" on page 13 of the June 2006 issue of *AJN* (Vol. 106, No. 6) by M. Cahill.

Nurse Editors Respond to ANA's Decision to Discontinue Affiliation With *AJN*

Since it began publishing more than a century ago, the *American Journal of Nursing (AJN)* has enjoyed a close relationship with the American Nurses Association (ANA). For the past decade, that relationship has included designating *AJN* as ANA's official journal and providing *AJN* as a benefit of ANA membership.

Recently, however, ANA announced its decision to launch a new publication as its official journal and to distribute that publication to its members in place of *AJN*. Although many of us who are members of ANA count on *AJN* as a benefit of our membership, we all are seriously concerned about the implications this decision holds for ANA, *AJN*, and the nursing profession.

ANA has characterized its move to launch a new publication as a business decision. Member subscriptions had been financed by the proceeds of ANA's sale of *AJN* to a large publisher ten years ago. As these funds approached exhaustion, ANA was confronted with the need to determine how to finance continued member subscriptions, if at all. Ultimately, it decided to launch a new, more modest publication that surely cannot be expected to substitute for the reputation, history, leadership, educational value, and practice-changing capacity of *AJN*.

We understand that balancing fiscal and programmatic priorities can be a challenging process. But hard-nosed budgetary decisions, no matter how well intentioned, can have unintended consequences that reach far beyond the financial. Certainly our profession has ample recent experience that illustrates this point.

AJN is a living link between nursing's history, its present, and its future. Maintaining a close relationship between

ANA and *AJN* has served both of them well—and has served the *profession* well since the dawn of organized nursing in the United States. *AJN* also is recognized internationally as an important voice for nursing. *AJN* provides ANA members and nonmembers with authoritative, credible, reliable, peer-reviewed, evidence-based, and useful content, including information, research, news, and analysis of issues in nursing practice, education, and policy. And by virtue of its stature as a long-established, highly respected, and widely read and cited professional journal, *AJN* is able to bring nursing's perspectives to a wide audience that extends beyond its readership and beyond nursing. In fact, *AJN* was one of the first nursing journals to be indexed by the National Library of Medicine and is one of few nursing journals included in the Institute of Scientific Information's Journal Citation Report.

The value of such a journal as a critical asset to the profession and to ANA's image throughout the world should be apparent to ANA's leaders, as should the importance of supporting the journal and maintaining a close relationship with it. Simply put, the profession is poorly served by separating the professional journal from the professional association.

It well may be too late for ANA to reconsider its decision, at least for now.

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