In September 2010, I began a 4-year term as the National Nursing Staff Development Organization (NNSDO) representative on the American Nurses Association (ANA) Congress on Nursing Practice and Economics (CNPE) and attended a CNPE meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland, at the ANA headquarters. The meeting was an orientation to the ANA and included speakers from the various divisions and subsidiaries of the ANA. The president of the International Council of Nurses, the president of ANA, and the executive director of ANA each gave updates.

The ANA represents the interests of more than 3 million nurses in the United States (ANA, 2010a). Simply stated, the mission of the ANA is “Nurses advancing our profession to improve health for all” (para. 2). To accomplish this mission, the ANA has representation from constituent member associations, usually state nurses’ associations, and the Center for American Nurses, a professional nursing organization with a mission to promote healthy work environments (Center for American Nurses, 2008). In addition, the ANA has organizational affiliates. Organizational affiliates are national nursing organizations that have organizational membership (ANA, 2010b). Organizational affiliates are important because they represent nurses who may not belong to ANA. The NNSDO is an organizational affiliate and may provide a voting representative to both the ANA House of Delegates and the ANA CNPE. Through this affiliation, nursing organizations are able to provide a unified voice on issues of interest to the nursing profession.

The Congress on Nursing Practice and Economics (CNPE) has several functions delineated in the bylaws (ANA, 2010c). In addition to the functions in the bylaws, the Congress receives directives from the Board of Directors and the ANA House of Delegates. The Congress serves as an advisory body to the ANA Board of Directors, providing guidance on policies and implementation of the strategic plan. The Congress is responsible for evaluating emerging healthcare trends and developing the nursing profession’s response to these trends through official position statements. In addition to developing new position statements, the Congress reviews existing position statements every 5 years to recommend retiring, revising, or reaffirming the position. The Congress is responsible for the review of specialty organizations’ scopes and standards of practice. In fact, my first exposure to the CNPE was when I was on the workgroup that revised the Nursing Professional Development (NPD) Scope and Standards of Practice (NNSDO & ANA 2010). Specialty nursing groups must respond to questions from the Congress concerning their scope and standards before the documents are ultimately approved and published.

The new Chair of the CNPE, Karen Tomajan, MS, RN, NEA-BC, is the Director of Nursing Quality and Special Projects at Integris Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City. Karen has a strong background in nursing professional development and served on the workgroup that revised the NPD Scope and Standards in 2010. She will be a great advocate for NPD in her position.

The work of the CNPE is accomplished through workgroups that include Education/Position Statement, Health Policy, Practice/Regulation, and Workforce. I have been appointed to the Education/Position Statement Workgroup. The work of the group will focus on four objectives from the ANA (2010d) Strategic Plan:

- **Strategic Imperative No. 1:** Professional practice excellence
  - Objective 1.3: Promote ANA’s educational advancement, continuing education, and professional development activities as significant and essential components to professional learning opportunities.

- **Strategic Imperative No. 3:** Knowledge and research
  - Objective 3.2: Advance nurses’ role in research, policy, and practice in the knowledge and use of evidence-based practice.

- **Strategic Imperative No. 5:** Advocacy for the workforce and workplace
  - Objective 5.4: Advocate for healthy work environments that advance the professional practice of nurses.
  - Objective 5.5: Advance efforts to address nursing workforce planning and development (p. 6).

During workgroup breakout sessions, each group began forming a plan for accomplishing its objectives. During brainstorming sessions, the Education/Position Statement workgroup focused on nursing education programs, faculty, students, and nurses (including development,
mentoring, and continuing education). In addition to reviewing several position statements, the ANA House of Delegates has charged the workgroup with developing a framework for novice nurse mentoring program demonstration projects. The Education/Position Statement workgroup will conduct monthly conference calls to continue its work.

I look forward to my term as the NNSDO representative on the CNPE and plan to represent the interests of nursing professional development in all that I do.

Mary Harper, PhD, RN-BC
Academic Mentor
Clinical Faculty
Western Governors University
Salt Lake City, Utah

References