



# National Report

## The State of the Association

Caroline S. Counts

“Conditions change. Results shouldn’t. Go on. Be a tiger.” So reads an ad in the February 2004 issue of Delta’s *Sky Magazine*. It goes on to say, “No matter the climate, high performers find new and innovative ways to prevail.” While the ad shows a picture of Tiger Woods swinging at a golf ball, it could have shown the members of the American Nephrology Nurses’ Association (ANNA) – nearly 11,000 of them – advancing nephrology nursing practice.

The high performers of ANNA are guided by a Strategic Plan that articulates what the Association wants to achieve for its members and other stakeholders. As outlined in our plan, ANNA’s goals are advocacy, recruitment and retention, membership, scholarship, leadership, and business (ANNA, 2004).

A strategic plan is a written document that is utilized to develop and execute strategies that turn the plan into actions. When properly developed, managed, and updated, a strategic plan provides a wonderful framework for an association to use to fulfill its goals and to keep the association moving forward.

In order for the strategic plan to be useful, it must be current and meaningful. The plan has to be periodically reviewed and updated. For ANNA, this last occurred at the Board of Directors’ meeting held in February 2004 in Charleston, SC. At that time, with the guidance of **Gail Wick** – ANNA’s guru in strategic planning – both the incoming Board and the outgoing Board reviewed and updated the plan. Our current Strategic Plan can be found on ANNA’s Web site ([www.annanurse.org](http://www.annanurse.org)).

The Strategic Plan permeates all levels of the Association. Chapters, committees, the Special Interest Groups, and other work groups all make use of the Strategic Plan in their everyday operations. ANNA’s Strategic Plan is a living, breathing document that works! The Strategic Plan prevails despite the work environment, despite the nursing shortage, despite issues involved with reimbursement, and despite other challenges of today’s environment.

As you will see reflected throughout the pages of this issue and written within this report, ANNA has had many accomplishments and successes these past 12 months. So, find yourself a comfortable seat and enjoy reading about the Association and what its members have accomplished.

### Advocacy

**Goal: ANNA will be the leading advocate for nephrology nursing and will advocate for individuals, families, and communities impacted by real or potential kidney disease.**

- ANNA joined Kidney Care Partners (KCP), a coalition of kidney disease organizations representing professionals, providers, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and patient support organizations. A complete list of coalition members can be found on the KCP Web site ([www.kidneycarepartners.org](http://www.kidneycarepartners.org)), which is linked to ANNA’s Web site. KCP is based in Washington, DC, and has been very active in lobbying on the federal level for many issues that are of importance to ANNA members, such as reimbursement rates. **Gail Wick** and **Nancy Sharp** are ANNA’s representatives to KCP. **Kathleen Smith** also has represented ANNA in this group’s activities.
- ANNA subscribes to a Web-based political communications service called CapWiz that allows ANNA members to gain more political information and to easily write letters to their legislators with just a few clicks of the mouse. All ANNA members are invited to use this service at no charge by clicking the “Legislation” button on the ANNA Web site.

### 2003-04 Board of Directors

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**Table 1**  
**Organizations Represented**  
**at Nephrology Nursing Shortage**  
**and Solutions Invitational Summit**

American Association of Kidney Patients  
 American Nephrology Nurses' Association  
 American Society of Nephrology  
 Amgen  
 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
 DaVita, Inc.  
 Dialysis Clinics, Inc.  
 Forum of ESRD Networks  
 Fresenius Medical Care  
 GAMBRO Healthcare  
 National Association of  
 Nephrology Technicians/Technologists  
 National Kidney Foundation  
 National Nephrology Associates  
 National Renal Administrators Association  
 Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission  
 Northwest Kidney Centers  
 Renal Care Group  
 Renal Physicians Association  
 U.S. General Accounting Office

**Table 2**  
**Task Forces Created as a Result**  
**of Nephrology Nursing Shortage**  
**and Solutions Invitational Summit**

**Linkages with School of Nursing Task Force**

*Goal:* Create linkages with schools of nursing to increase student knowledge of and experiences in nephrology nursing.

**Education, Development, and Mentoring of Managers Task Force**

*Goal:* Develop methods to provide management and leadership, education, development, and mentoring for nephrology nurses.

**Promotion of Nephrology Nursing Task Force**

*Goal:* Develop a collaborative program to promote nephrology nursing to students and registered nurses.

**Positive Work Environment Task Force**

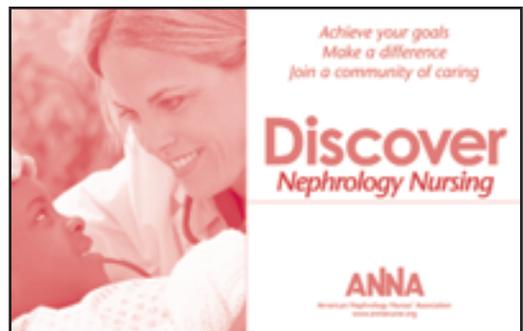
*Goal:* Explore and define characteristics found in exceptional ("magnet") dialysis units and recommend strategies to create positive work environments that promote RN satisfaction and retention.

- ANNA met with representatives of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on several occasions to discuss a variety of issues important to nephrology nurses. Among the topics discussed were the nursing shortage, a means of tracking how many nurses are working in dialysis units via the CMS 2744 form, ensuring that advanced practice nurses could be counted as part of the total monthly medical visits made to a patient in an outpatient unit, etc. ANNA also was represented at several of CMS's Open Door meetings that focused on nephrology issues.
- ANNA continues to monitor legislative activity that might impact nephrology nursing and patient care in all 50 states.
- ANNA is a member of the Nursing Organizations Alliance – the "Alliance." There are 65 nursing organizations that belong to the Alliance. The mission of the Alliance is to represent the interests of nursing organizations through communication, collaboration, education, and advocacy. It supports and strengthens the work of individual organizations and the nursing profession (Alliance, 2003). The Alliance also sponsors the annual Nurse In Washington Internship (NIWI) program, during which individuals attend a comprehensive 4-day conference that includes legislative programs and a visit to Capitol Hill. Also, through the Alliance, ANNA endorsed the American Society of Pain Management's position statement "Pain Management in Patients with Addictive Disease."
- ANNA, with **Suzann VanBuskirk** at the helm, continued the work of the first-of-its-kind *Nephrology Nursing Shortage and Solutions: An Invitational Summit*. Attendees included representatives from major providers, the government, and other nephrology related associations (see Table 1). Four task forces (see Table 2) are working on the outcomes of the Summit: (1) marketing nephrology nursing as a career choice; (2) defining those characteristics that would define a "magnet" dialysis unit; (3) collaborating with colleges of nursing to increase the exposure and clinical experiences of students in the area of nephrology; and, (4) providing opportunities for nephrology nurses to hone their leadership and management skills.
- ANNA presented a poster at the 2004 CMS/Forum of ESRD Networks' Annual Meeting.
- ANNA, under the leadership of **Christy Price Rabetoy**, continues to work with the National Renal Administrators Association (NRAA) and the Renal Physicians Association (RPA) in the development of a joint position statement regarding acute dialytic care services.
- ANNA was represented by **Elaine Colvin** at the Forum of ESRD Networks' National Consensus Conference *Dialysis Patient-Provider Conflict: Designing a Collaborative Action Plan with ESRD Stakeholders*.
- ANNA collaborated with the National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC) and shared information about the Association with several nonprofit associations within the nephrology and urologic markets.

## Recruitment and Retention

### Goal: Ensure the future of the specialty of nephrology nursing.

- ANNA produced the *Discover Nephrology Nursing* brochure that was designed to attract both student nurses and registered nurses to nephrology. Additionally, it was designed to attract nephrology nurses who are not members of ANNA to join the Association. The brochure can be downloaded from the ANNA Web site or hard copies may be obtained through the national office at no cost.
- ANNA made reprints of *Memories of Nephrology Nursing*. This feature, which appeared in the August 2003 issue of the *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, included members' accounts of their most memorable experiences in the specialty area. These reprints are beneficial for recruitment initiatives.
- ANNA distributed additional copies of the *Nephrology Nursing Journal* to units and facilities in the geographic locations that surrounded the sites of the National Symposium and Fall Meeting in an attempt to increase attendance at the meetings as well as to increase awareness and membership in ANNA.
- ANNA met with members of the team who created the Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing's Future. Johnson & Johnson will address ANNA leaders prior to the 35th National Symposium to review the results of this campaign and to describe its future direction.
- ANNA established an ad hoc committee to identify and develop a mentorship program proposal. **Donna Bednarski** served as the line officer. The goal of a mentorship program is to foster the professional development of registered nurses new to nephrology and/or new to ANNA. A mentorship program would then hopefully lead to increased job satisfaction/satisfaction with membership in ANNA, increased confidence, and retention of that employee/member. The information gathered by this committee was shared with **Donna Painter**, chairperson of the Leadership Development Committee; **Sally Russell**, Director of Educational Services; and **Carolyn Latham**, chairperson of the Task Force on Management, Leadership, and Mentoring from the Summit.
- ANNA created a task force at the Summit that is charged with exploring and defining those characteristics found in exceptional or magnet dialysis units. They will then recommend strategies to create positive work environments that will promote retention and satisfaction of registered nurses. **Jane Gardner** serves as the chairperson with **Glenda Payne** serving as the Board liaison.
- ANNA was well represented at the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) meetings in an effort to market nephrology nursing. At the Mid Year Conference, **Sue Preuett Cary** spoke to students, and members of the **Fleur-de-lis Chapter** manned ANNA's booth. At NSNA's Annual Convention, **Randee Brieterman White** and members of the **Music City Chapter** provided these same services. ANNA continues to offer discounted membership fees and program registration to student nurses.



- ANNA has other projects underway that will target student nurses. At the Summit, **Charlotte Thomas-Hawkins** was appointed chairperson of the task force charged with creating linkages with schools of nursing to increase student knowledge of and experiences in nephrology. **JoAnne Gilmore** serves as the Board liaison.
- ANNA continues to be visible at other meetings such as the Canadian Association of Nephrology Nurses and Technicians (CANNT), the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), the Annual Dialysis Conference, NephroAsia, Nursing 2004 Symposium, Medical Case Management Congress (MCMC), Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN) Annual Convention, National Conference for Nurse Practitioners (NCNP), American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE), Nursing Management Congress, American Nurses' Association (ANA), and Sigma Theta Tau. ANNA also has alliances with other organizations such as Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow (NHT) and Americans for Nursing Shortage Relief (ANSR).
- ANNA has been highly visible in the press this year thanks to the efforts of **Janet D'Alesandro** of Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc., who provides public relations services for the Association. See Tables 3 and 4 for a listing of these activities.

## Membership

### Goal: ANNA will be the association of choice for nephrology nurses.

- ANNA's dues remain at a very low rate, just \$60 per year.
- ANNA's National Office continues to provide outstanding membership services in its communications with members on a day-to-day basis. Over the past 12 months, the national office initiated and responded to more than 60,000 individual members' telephone calls and emails.
- ANNA delivered services and products to members through the U.S. mail and via email. Throughout the year, the national office coordinated more than 250,000 outgoing pieces of mail to members such as *Nephrology Nursing Journals*, *ANNA Updates*, election ballots, Symposium and Fall announcements, membership renewal information, surveys, chapter mailings, special announcements, etc. That's an average of more than 20 pieces of mail per member.
- ANNA delivered its biweekly "RenalWEB E-News" and monthly "ANNA E-News" to members via email. That's 38 additional communications per member per year. Member contacts throughout the

**Table 3**  
**ANNA Press Releases**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Content</b>
May 6, 2003	ANNA News	Three news items announced: August 15 is National ESRD Education Day, ANNA Issues Position Statement on Vascular Access, and New Fact Sheets Available Online.
May 9, 2003	ANNA Inducts New Officers	Announcement of ANNA's 2003-04 officers.
May 9, 2003	ANNA Convenes 34th National Symposium	Post-conference report on ANNA's 2003 symposium.
May 21, 2003	ANNA Announces Award Winners	Full report of all 2003 ANNA award, scholarship, and grant winners.
May 21, 2003	Karen Robbins Wins ANNA Award	Karen Robbins, receives the "Outstanding Contribution to ANNA Award."
June 13, 2003	ANNA to Educate Legislators on August 15 'ESRD Education Day'	Press release informs nursing community about ANNA's national ESRD education campaign.
August 6, 2003	ANNA to Present Fall Meeting for Nurse Managers, Advanced Practice Nurses, and Clinicians	Outlines Fall Meeting program, special events, continuing education and registration information.
September 9, 2003	Nephrology Nursing Community Mourns Passing of Janel Parker, Nationally Recognized Nephrology Nursing Leader	A tribute to Janel for her outstanding record of service to ANNA and nephrology nursing.
October 2, 2003	ANNA Launches Education Campaign for Legislators	Reported on the success of ESRD Education Day.
December 24, 2003	ANNA Symposium to Highlight Political Advocacy	Outlines National Symposium program, special events, continuing education and registration information.
February 6, 2004	ANNA Issues Position Statement on Nursing's Role in Management of End-Stage Renal Disease	ANNA asks the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to evaluate all proposals for the ESRD Disease Management Demonstration Project for the appropriate inclusion of nephrology nurses.

past 12 months through mail and email totaled more than 500,000.

- ANNA chapters continue to provide meaningful and quality educational programs for members. During the past 12 months, chapters provided 411 continuing education activities for their constituents.
- ANNA conducted several surveys during the year to gain a better understanding of the needs of members, non-renewing members, and nonmembers. In a deliberate effort, randomly selected members were not sent more than one survey by mail. 500 surveys each were mailed to members to solicit input about the *Nephrology Nursing Journal* and the *ANNA Update*. A survey also was mailed to non-renewed members to ask why they did not renew their membership.
- ANNA's national leaders were asked to complete lead sheets at the National Symposium in an effort to identify persons who would like to become more active in the Association. **Jenny Bell**, Nominations Committee Chairperson, coordinated the effort to contact every member identified.
- ANNA revised several policies and procedures related to chapters.

- ANNA sends chapter member lists electronically to chapter leaders every 3 months. A list of new members is sent in the months in between to ensure that chapters are updated regularly about who their new members are.
- ANNA revised the *Volunteer Leader's Orientation Manual* through a true group effort and published it on CD ROM for ease of use.
- ANNA placed the large *Policy and Procedure Manual* on a CD ROM.
- ANNA revised the candidate package for regional and national positions and placed it on the ANNA Web site, making it easier for potential candidates to access the information.
- ANNA implemented an exit survey for outgoing leaders. Through their experience and their suggestions, needed changes can be implemented.
- ANNA made several improvements to its Web site and continually adds content for chapters and members. All E-News editions (both Association news and RenalWEB) are archived in the Members Only section. The *ANNA Update* is also accessible electronically on the Web site. Last year, ANNA's Web site had more than 270,000 visits.

## Scholarship

**Goal: Nephrology nursing practice will be evidence based.**

- ANNA published six quality issues of *Nephrology Nursing Journal* that included approximately 35 articles and 660 pages. The journal, under the leadership of Editor **Beth Ulrich** and Associate Editor **Karen Robbins**, continues to improve and provide a valuable service to members.
- ANNA subscribes to RenalWEB to enable members to keep up with the latest in renal news, issues, clinical information, and links to other Web sites. The RenalWEB E-News is delivered to members via email every other week, 26 times per year.
- ANNA has a relationship with the Hypertension, Dialysis and Clinical Nephrology Web site ([www.hdcn.com](http://www.hdcn.com)) where *Nephrology Nursing Journal* articles are posted for continuing education. Members can read articles, complete and submit the posttest, and immediately receive a downloadable CE certificate.
- ANNA recognizes that patients with kidney disease who reside in nursing homes or long-term care facilities may present challenges to the staff of those facilities as they have limited knowledge regarding the care of these patients. With that in mind, an ad hoc committee was formed under the direction of **Sue Cronin**. This committee is currently working on an educational program aimed at this target audience with the help of the Hemodialysis Special Interest Group. **Glenda Payne** serves as the Board liaison.
- ANNA's 34th National Symposium held in Chicago in April 2003 was very successful. More than 1,400 nephrology nurses attended, and there were 250 exhibits.
- ANNA's 2003 Fall Meeting in SavANNAh, GA, broke attendance records for a fall program. More than 425 nephrology nurses and 35 exhibitors were in attendance.
- ANNA's fall 2003 audio conference also beat all previous attendance records as 73 chapters hosted 98 sites with 839 participants! The 2004 winter audio conference also was well attended. Early reports indicate that approximately 60 chapters hosted 95 sites with 711 participants.
- ANNA chose to honor one of its greatest leaders and visionaries following her untimely and accidental death on August 26, 2003. A Career Mobility Scholarship was renamed the Janel Parker Career Mobility Scholarship sponsored by Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc. ANNA established the Janel Parker Memorial Fund through the *Nursing Economic\$* Foundation for members who wished to make personal contributions in Janel's name. 100% of the donations will be presented as a one-time award to a qualified recipient during the 2004 National Symposium. And the keynote address at the National Symposium will now be known as the *Janel Parker Memorial Keynote Address*.
- ANNA's previous awards and scholarship winners were asked by **Sandy Bodin**, Awards Committee Chairperson, to share their experiences as recipients. Their stories were shared in the ANNA

**Table 4**  
**ANNA Media Coverage**

- NurseZone.com posted article entitled "Nephrology Nurses Hold Annual Meeting," a post-conference report about the 2003 National Symposium.
- *Dialysis & Transplantation* (May 2003) included a report of ANNA's election results and an announcement of Karen Robbins' appointment as *Nephrology Nursing Journal* associate editor.
- *Advance for Nurses*, Maryland/DC/Virginia region (May 2003) published "ANNA National Symposium" and "ANNA Names Chapter Coordinator," which highlighted the 2003 National Symposium and Avis Allen's induction as Southeast Chapter Coordinator.
- NurseZone.com posted an article entitled "Karen Robbins wins 'Outstanding Contribution to ANNA' award."
- NurseZone.com posted article entitled "ANNA's new officers assume their offices at the 2003 symposium."
- *Nephrology New & Issues* (July 2003) published "ANNA Adopts Position Paper on Vascular Access."
- *Advance for Nurses*, Maryland/DC/Virginia region (July 2003) published an article entitled "ANNA Announces Award Winners" in the Regional News section.
- Amgen's internal Web site posted the article, "American Nephrology Nurses' Association to Educate Legislators on August 15 'ESRD Day.'"
- *RPA News* (July 2003) published an article about ESRD Education Day.
- RenalWeb ([www.renalweb.com](http://www.renalweb.com)) posted the press release announcing ESRD Education Day and the press release on the success of ESRD Education Day following the event.
- The Kidney Care Partners Web site ([www.kidney-carepartners.org](http://www.kidney-carepartners.org)) posted an article entitled "Kidney Care Partner ANNA Launches Education Campaign for Legislators," which highlighted ESRD Education Day.
- *Nephrology New & Issues* (August 2003) published "ANNA declares August 15 as 'ESRD Education Day'" in the "Association News" section.
- NurseZone.com published information about ESRD Education in an article entitled "American Nephrology Nurses' Association Launches Education Campaign for Legislators."
- ESRD Education Day received local newspaper and television coverage in many states.
- [www.Nurse.com](http://www.Nurse.com) Web site posted "A Day in the Life of a Nephrology Nurse." In the article, ANNA President Caroline Counts talks about the work of nephrology nurses. She describes how she got into nephrology nursing, her daily practice, current issues, treatment, and patient care.
- Several publications covered the untimely death of Janel Parker, including the *Gulf Coast Nursing Times* and *Advance for Nurses*.
- The *Chicago Tribune* (December 28, 2003) featured an article entitled "Special Demand: Nephrology Nurses Focus on Patient Education." ANNA members Charlotte Szromba and Mary Haras are quoted throughout the article.

**Table 5**  
**ANNA Position Statements**

- Autonomy of the Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission (NNCC)
- Advanced Practice in Nephrology Nursing
- Certification in Nephrology Nursing
- Concerns Regarding Inclusion of End Stage Renal Disease Patients in Managed Care Plans
- Daily Hemodialysis (DHD) / Nocturnal Hemodialysis (NHD)
- Delegation of Nursing Care Activities
- Financial Incentives for Organ Donation
- ANNA Health Policy Agenda
- ANNA Health Policy Statement
- Impact of the National Nursing Shortage on Quality Nephrology Nursing Care
- Joint Position Statement of the American Nephrology Nurses' Association (ANNA) and the National Association of Nephrology Technicians/Technologists (NANT) on Unlicensed Personnel in Dialysis
- Minimum Preparation for Entry Into Nursing Practice
- Nondiscrimination in Educational Programs
- Role of Nephrology Nursing in ESRD Disease Management
- Role of Unlicensed Assistive Personnel in Dialysis Therapy
- RPA/ASN and ANNA Joint Position Paper on Collaboration between Nephrologists and Advanced Practice Nurses
- Vascular Access for Dialysis

Update (Bodin, 2003, 2004). In addition, archives of award recipients have been created and are available on the ANNA Web site.

- ANNA scheduled several publications for revision. *The Certification Review Course* is currently being revised under the direction of **Lynda Ball**. Revisions to the *Contemporary Nephrology Nursing* textbook are being managed by Editor **Anita Molzahn** and Associate Editor **Evelyn Butera**. The *Standards and Guidelines of Clinical Practice for Nephrology Nursing* once again will be edited under the leadership of **Sally Burrows Hudson**. The next edition of the *Core Curriculum for Nephrology Nursing* also will be scheduled for revision over the next several years.
- ANNA's Continuing Education Approval Board, with **Sue Preuett Cary** as chairperson, revised its guidelines to remain current with American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) requirements. CEAB continues to provide a valuable service for ANNA members and constituents.
- ANNA produced a CD ROM from its successful audio conference on hepatitis C that was sent to all chapter presidents. It is also available for purchase and provides continuing education credit. A second CD ROM is under production from the fall 2003/winter 2004 audio conference series on chronic kidney disease and the K/DOQI guidelines. Watch for it soon.

## Leadership

**Goal: ANNA will be a leader in the nephrology health care community.**

- ANNA held its first ESRD Education Day on August 15, 2003, under the leadership and guidance of ANNA Legislative Consultant **Nancy Sharp**. Across the nation ANNA chapter members invited their Congresspersons to visit local dialysis units, both in hospitals and in outpatient settings. The purpose was to provide an educational opportunity for legislators and policymakers to learn more about end-stage renal disease (ESRD), dialysis units, and quality patient care. This endeavor was incredibly successful.
- ANNA will host its second ESRD Education Day on August 13, 2004, under the leadership and guidance of **Kathy Kuchta**. The *ESRD Briefing Book for State and Federal Policymakers* is available for download from the ANNA Web site and is currently being updated in preparation for this second endeavor.
- ANNA will provide opportunities for participants of the Volunteer Leaders Orientation Workshop and the Legislative Workshop, which are being held prior to the 35th National Symposium, to experience "Capitol Hill Day." These nurses will hone their leadership and advocacy skills and then pay visits to their representatives in Washington, DC.
- ANNA recognizes the importance of developing leaders not only within the Association, but also in the field of nephrology. At the Summit, **Carolyn Latham** was appointed co-chair of a task force charged with exploring opportunities for mentoring new managers, leadership development, and clarification of the role of the professional nephrology nurse. **Lesley Dinwiddie** serves as the Board liaison.
- ANNA's position statements were created or reviewed and/or revised with the help of **Karen Schardin**. The text of all position statements can be found on ANNA's Web site. The importance of these position statements (see Table 5) cannot be over emphasized as they represent the official opinion of ANNA on a variety of subjects.
- ANNA leaders who have served on the Board of Directors over the years are now listed on the Web site in an historical document.
- ANNA members have served as leaders in a variety of situations and within their communities.

## Business

**Goal: ANNA will have long-term financial success.**

- ANNA's financial records underwent a certified audit by Gold, Meltzer, Platsky, & Wise and were found to be in good order.
- ANNA's year-end 2003-04 fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) showed a positive bottom line — that is our income exceeded our expenses.
- ANNA's financial advisor, **Lou Monnoletto** of Legg Mason investments, attended the February 2004 Board of Directors' (BOD) meeting to review ANNA's investment strategies and financial plan with the 2003-04 and 2004-05 Board of Directors.

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## Counting Dialysis Unit Staff

ANNA has always wanted to know how many registered nurses, and other nursing staff, are employed either full time or part time in dialysis facilities across the nation. In addition, it would be valuable to collect data on the number of vacancies. When enough data has been collected we might be able to compare specific quality measures with numbers and types of staff employed in dialysis. In order to support this collection of nursing staff data, ANNA submitted comments during the revision period suggesting changes to CMS Form 2744, "ESRD Facility Survey Form." ANNA leadership will keep members apprized of this activity.

## CMS Open Door Forums

ANNA leadership has attended CMS ESRD and Clinical Labs Open Door Forums since they were initiated in 2002. CMS staff responsible for tracking various ESRD activities are on hand to answer specific ESRD questions. The call-in telephone lines are open to the public. While 40-50 persons attend the forums in Baltimore, several hundred individuals have called in to listen and to ask questions. Visit the ESRD Information Resource Web site ([www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/esrd.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/esrd.asp)) and sign up for Open Forum announcements.

## Response to CMS on EPO

CMS recently solicited assistance with reviewing current erythropoietin (EPO) policy in the Medicare Renal Dialysis Facility Manual which restricts reimbursement of EPO therapy for new dialysis patients who do not have a history of prior EPO use until their hemoglobin level falls below 10 g/dL. ANNA's response questioned the medical basis for this policy, which sets a limit below the lower end of the K/DOQI target range, and which is contraindicated by a great deal of scientific evidence in the medical literature. ANNA further recommended that CMS revise current EPO policy and issue target clinical hematocrit/hemoglobin guidelines that in general will minimize the percentage of patients with hematocrit/hemoglobin levels below 33%/11g/dL, since patients below this range have higher morbidity and mortality.

## Quality in ESRD Facilities

ANNA joined KCP in providing a response to the Government Accounting Office's (GAO) report stating that CMS's oversight of dialysis facilities was not as comprehensive as it should be. Citing deficiencies in oversight by CMS, the GAO report recommended several changes be instituted in order to bring all ESRD units up to a higher compliance with the standards.

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- ANNA's 2004-05 budget proposal was presented as a balanced budget to continue to keep ANNA's expenses at or below ANNA's income.
- ANNA's regional budgets were adjusted to reflect the current needs of each region.
- ANNA sought sponsorship from corporate friends and members whenever possible to cover the costs of special projects such as the *Peritoneal Dialysis Resource Guide*, *ESRD Briefing Book for State and Federal Policymakers* used for ANNA's national ESRD Education Day, Summit, audio conferences, Legislative Workshop, educational programs, journal supplements, and more.

## Summary

Success is defined as the accomplishment of what is desired or aimed at (Cayne, 1993). By anyone's standards for an association, ANNA achieved success in the 2003-04 association year. This was not the result of any one person's actions but rather the compilation of many persons' many actions. ANNA's success is a team effort.

The Strategic Plan provided the blueprint for the team to follow. And the team took the blueprint and ran with it. The team begins with individual members. Individual members come together to form chapters and committees; individual members come together to form regions; and we all come together to form our national association – the American Nephrology Nurses' Association. We are joined by corporate members, who enable us to accomplish more than we could have by ourselves. Their support is very important to ANNA's success. In addition, the services provided by Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc., ANNA's management firm, are critical to ANNA's success.

Magic Johnson once said, "Everybody on a championship team doesn't get the publicity, but everyone can say he's a champion" (Maxwell, 2001). In 2003-04, ANNA had a championship team. Everyone on that team unfortunately will not get the recognition he or she deserves. But everyone who contributed to ANNA's success can feel the pride of doing a great job. Thank you to every member on the ANNA team!

**Caroline S. Counts, MSN, RN, CNN**  
ANNA President  
Palmetto Chapter

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