

News of Health

Repairing America's Health Care System

(NAPSA)—Most Americans agree that the nation's health care system is in desperate need of repair, and some innovative suggestions for fixing what ails the system are being offered by leaders in nursing.

While nurses' contributions to health care are often overlooked, say these leaders, nurses can serve as a critical and indispensable part of solving the health care crisis.

The American Academy of Nursing has documented some powerful examples of research-based solutions developed by nursing leaders.

One innovative care model, developed by two nurse practitioners, serves people who have long-term or advanced illness, are older or have disabilities.

The health care model has been so successful in overcoming fragmentation in health services, improving access to medical and nonmedical services, reducing emergency treatments and hospitalizations and lowering costs to Medicare and Medicaid that it has expanded to serving more than 120,000 people in 35 states.

A second example is a nurse-led program that has also been adopted in 23 states. It is a nurse home visitation program that provides care, via a registered nurse, to first-time mothers for the first two years of a child's life.

The program improves pregnancy outcomes, child health and



Adopting viable models of health care can result in lower costs and a healthier population, say nursing's leaders.

development, and the economic self-sufficiency of the family, all while returning an estimated \$2.88 per dollar invested in the program.

"While others continue to debate how to solve today's health care challenges, such as the uninsured and disparities in health delivery, nurse researchers and experts are finding solutions, piece by piece, from the ground up," said Donna Shalala, president of the University of Miami and former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. "The promise of these techniques is enormous and needs to be shared with the American people."

For more information, visit the American Academy of Nursing at www.aannet.org.