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Buckwalter Appointed to IOM Committee Addressing Geriatric Mental Health Workforce Needs

Fellow is Co-Principal Investigator of Geropsychiatric Nursing Collaborative

Washington, DC (February 10, 2011) – American Academy of Nursing (AAN) Fellow Kathleen Buckwalter, PhD, RN, FAAN, was appointed to the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Committee on the Mental Health Workforce for Geriatric Populations, which is set to have its first meeting on March 7-8 in Washington, DC. Buckwalter will aid the committee's effort to make policy recommendations that meet the mental health care needs of individuals 65 years of age or older through the establishment of a well-trained workforce.

IOM convened the committee in response to a congressional mandate for a study on how to meet the mental health needs of a growing and increasingly diverse older population.

The provisional committee, which is currently subject to comments and feedback on the National Academies' website, is chaired by Dr. Dan Blazer and comprised of 16 professionals. Biographies of each member can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

"I am delighted to be appointed to this important committee and to work with such distinguished interdisciplinary colleagues," said Buckwalter, who is Chair of the IOM's Biology of Aging/Geriatrics Interest Group. "Serving in this capacity will advance the goals of the American Academy of Nursing's Geropsychiatric Nursing Collaborative by addressing our nation's critical requirement for more and better prepared providers to care for the growing number of vulnerable and underserved older adults with mental health needs."

From 2006-2011, Buckwalter directed the University of Iowa John A. Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence, one of nine centers that are key components of the Academy's Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity (BAGNC) initiative. Buckwalter, with Cornelia K. Beck, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Lois K. Evans, PhD, RN, FAAN, is a Co-Principal Investigator of the John A. Hartford Foundation-funded Geropsychiatric Nursing Collaborative (GPNC), which was founded in 2008 to improve the quality of mental health care provided to older adults by enhancing the knowledge and skills of nurses.

The aims of GPNC are to include geropsychiatric nursing core competency enhancements at all levels of nursing education, and identify and disseminate geropsychiatric nursing curriculum content for implementation in basic, graduate and continuing educational programs.

"Dr. Buckwalter's involvement on the IOM committee, through her vast experience in geriatric care, will ensure that the cognitive health needs of aging patients are fulfilled," said AAN CEO Cheryl G. Sullivan, MSES. "The Academy is proud of her representation as a Fellow at such an influential level."

As part of the IOM committee, Buckwalter will be charged with:

- Providing a systematic and trend analysis of the current and projected mental and behavioral health care needs of the target population;

- Within the target population, considering the special needs of growing ethnic populations, of veterans with post traumatic stress disorder, and of persons with chronic disease; and
- Weighing the impact of improved diagnostic techniques, of addressing mental health issues as part of effective chronic disease management, and of the implementation of the Federal mental health parity law on meeting the mental health needs of the target population.

[Click here to learn more about the project.](#)

[Click here to learn more about the Geropsychiatric Nursing Collaborative.](#)

[Click here to learn more about the Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity.](#)

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