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NEWS RELEASE



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**AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION
CALLS FOR ACTION
IN WAKE OF NEWTOWN MASSACRE**

SILVER SPRING, MD – In the wake of the Newtown massacre, the American Nurses Association (ANA) today called on President Obama, Congress, and policymakers at the state and local level to take swift action to address factors that together will help prevent more senseless acts of violence.

“Like the rest of the nation, America’s nurses are heartbroken as we grieve the unthinkable loss and profound tragedy that unfolded last week in Newtown. This horrific event is a tipping point and serves as a call to action,” said ANA President Karen A. Daley, PhD, RN, FAAN.

“Our country has witnessed unspeakable acts of mass shootings,” she said. “The common thread in each of these tragedies has been the lethal combination of easy access to guns and inadequate access to mental health services.”

ANA is calling on policymakers to:

- Restore access to mental health services for individuals and families
- Increase students’ access to nurses and mental health professionals from the elementary school level through college
- Ban assault weapons and enact other meaningful gun control reforms to protect society

As the largest single group of health care professionals, registered nurses witness firsthand the devastation from the injuries sustained from gun violence. Nurses also witness the trauma of individuals, families, and communities impacted by violence.

Over the past decade, cutbacks within schools and community health care systems have seriously impeded critical and needed access to school nurses and mental health professionals trained to recognize and intervene early with those who are at-risk for violent behavior.

The public mental health system has sustained a period of devastating cuts over time. These cuts have been exacerbated during the Great Recession despite an increase in the demand for services for all populations, including our nation’s veterans. States have cut vital services, such as community and hospital-based psychiatric care, housing, and access to medications. Looming budget cuts could lead to further cuts in services.

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ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 3.1 million registered nurses through its constituent and state nurses associations and its organizational affiliates. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public. Please visit www.nursingworld.org for more information.

