

# POLICY POSITION STATEMENT

## Issue being addressed:

Defining and/or supporting health, nursing and other positions which influence global health.

## Background of issue:

Sigma was founded to advance knowledge, promote learning and foster service through nursing scholarship and leadership derived from academic excellence and a social and ethical commitment to the values and virtues of love, honor and courage. The vision of Sigma is to create a global community of nurses who lead through nursing knowledge, education, service and research to improve health care of the world's people. Sigma has a social responsibility to address public health care and nursing issues that influence health and health care globally.

The rate and scope of change in global health care is enormous. It is imperative that the needs of the public are addressed as health care is redefined. While this provides opportunities for institutional and system reorganization, the provision of more equitable health care delivery and the emergence of new paradigms of thinking, implementation and evaluation, it also requires nursing leadership. Nursing leadership involves socially responsible use of knowledge and collective expertise resulting in action that transforms the health of communities and environments. Nursing leadership in the transformation process also involves nurses' participation in the policy process – from development, to implementation, to monitoring and evaluation.

Since the work of Florence Nightingale, nurses have helped shape public, health and nursing policy. Visionary nurse leaders understood the consequences of the social, political and economic factors on the health and well-being of the public. Today nurses continue to make an important contribution to planning and decision-making, and to the development of appropriate and effective public, health and nursing policy on all levels.

While individual nurses have policy responsibilities, professional nursing organizations such as Sigma have a role in promoting the participation of nurses in local, national and international health decision-making and policy development contexts. They also have a role in helping ensure nurse leaders have adequate preparation to enable them to participate in the policy process. Through its unique policy work and resources, Sigma can help strengthen nurses' involvement and presence within the policy arena. Through time the Sigma strategic directions will advance through such work – supporting nurses to help shape health care, as well as to demonstrate the value and contributions of the nursing profession to the health and well-being of society.

## Policy or position developed, recommended, adopted:

Sigma is committed to providing opportunities and forums for nurses and others around the world to be informed, share knowledge, openly discuss health care, nursing and social concerns, and speak to public, health and nursing policy issues. Consistent with and in support of the mission and vision of the organization, Sigma disseminates strategies and findings on health and social issues to a

variety of publics and may develop policies relevant to these issues. These policies may be expressed as position statements, briefs, guidelines, by-laws or white papers and are distributed to members and others as informational resources for their consideration. Sigma may also decide to support or not support the policies of other organizations.

## Resources/references:

1. International Council of Nurses. (2000). Participation of nurses in health services decision making and policy development. Position Statement. <http://www.icn.ch/pspolicydev00.htm>
2. Canadian Nurses Association. (2000b). Nursing is a political act: the bigger picture. *Nursing Now: Issues and Trends in Canadian Nursing*, 8, 1–5.
3. Clarke, H. F. (2003). Health and nursing policy: A matter of politics, power and professionalism. In M. McIntyre, & E. Thomlinson (Eds.). *Realities of Canadian Nursing-Professional, Practice and Power Issues*. Lippincott Williams Wilkins: Philadelphia, US. P. 60-82.

Approval date and by whom:

Approved April 2005, Sigma Theta Tau International Board of Directors.

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## Sigma mission statement:

The Sigma provides leadership and scholarship in practice, education and research to enhance the health of all people. We support the learning and professional development of our members, who strive to improve nursing care worldwide.

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