

**TOPIC: IN SUPPORT OF INCLUDING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, SUCH AS RESPONSE TO TERRORISM AND TRIAGE IN MOCK DISASTERS, IN NURSING CURRICULA**

**SUBMITTED BY: Tennessee Association of Student Nurses**

WHEREAS, infectious or toxic weapons in skilled hands could cause considerably more casualties among ordinary Americans than the estimated 5,000 dead and missing at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; and

WHEREAS, bioterrorism is the intentional release of a virus, bacteria, or toxin upon a population for the purpose of causing illness or death; and

WHEREAS, experts believe the two most likely biological agents would be anthrax--a deadly bacterial disease spread by spores and generally confined to sheep, cattle, horses, goats, and pigs--and smallpox--a viral scourge that killed millions of people throughout the centuries until it was declared eradicated worldwide two decades ago; and

WHEREAS, it is suspected that only 10 percent to 15 percent of the U.S. population is immune to smallpox; and

WHEREAS, a single case of pulmonary anthrax represents a national emergency; and

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the agency that would be in charge of determining the nature of a germ outbreak in the hours and days after an attack, concedes that the public health system right now is unable to detect and respond to a biological attack; and

WHEREAS, simple triage and decontamination provided by front-line healthcare personnel can help prevent the medical system from being entirely overwhelmed; and

WHEREAS, mass casualty drills or mock disasters are valuable components of any preparedness plan; and

WHEREAS, in previous disasters, experts found that nurses who were most effective in leadership roles generally had formal responsibilities in the disaster plan and had previous disaster training and experiences; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) and its constituents support including in nursing curricula across the nation disaster preparedness and awareness of local, state, and federal emergency management plans; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the education given on disaster preparedness include, at the bare minimum, information about how to recognize the early signs and symptoms and which precautions to use for common biological and chemical agents used in terrorism, such as anthrax and smallpox; and be it further

RESOLVED, that nursing students be taught the basics of triage through the use of mock disasters or something equivalent; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA send copies of this resolution to the American Red Cross, the American Nurses Association, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, the National League for Nursing, the American Organization of Nurse Executives, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Office of Homeland Security, and all others deemed appropriate by the NSNA Board of Directors.