

**EIGHTY-SIXTH NATIONAL CONVENTION  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE  
August 31, September 1, 2, 2004**

**Resolution No. 237: The American Legion Policy On Nurse Recruitment And Retention  
Origin: Wyoming  
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation**

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the largest nursing work force in the country with over 55,000 nursing personnel; and

WHEREAS, This work force has four basic categories of employees consisting of advanced practice nurses (APNs), registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and nursing assistants; and

WHEREAS, VA nurses are one of the most important resources in delivering high-quality, compassionate care to veterans; and

WHEREAS, The nation is facing an unprecedented nursing shortage that could potentially have a profound impact on the care given to our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, A study published in The New England Journal of Medicine found there were shorter inpatient stays and lower complication rates in hospitals with higher staffing levels, while there were longer inpatient stays and increased urinary infections, gastrointestinal bleeding, pneumonia and shock or cardiac arrest in hospitals with lower staffing levels; and

WHEREAS, VA nurses are consistently reporting that nurse staffing levels are inadequate to provide safe and effective care; and

WHEREAS, Many VA nurses also report that wage scales and benefits are inadequate and restrict the ability of VA to keep beds and programs functional; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing workforce data support the conclusion that it is likely the number of current VA nurses in the workforce will decline sharply and rapidly; and

WHEREAS, This decline is attributed to an aging workforce wherein large number of nursing personnel will be eligible for retirement through 2005; and

WHEREAS, VA must be able to retain and recruit well-qualified nurses in order to maintain the quality of care provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, A significant part of this recruitment and retention effort is VA-administered initiatives to enhance the educational preparation of nursing personnel, including scholarship and loan repayment programs; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Nashville, Tennessee, August 31, September 1, 2, 2004, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop an aggressive strategy to recruit, train, and retain advanced practice nurses, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing assistants to meet the inpatient and outpatient health care needs of veterans; and, be it further**

**RESOLVED, That The American Legion affirm its support of VA education-assistance programs for APNs, RNs, LPNs, and nursing assistants; and, be it finally**

**RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge VA to provide equitable and competitive wages for APNs, RNs, LPNs, and nursing assistants.**