Resolution # 6

**TOPIC: INCREASING AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ON SHARPS DISPOSAL IN THE COMMUNITY**

**SUBMITTED BY: University of Iowa Association of Nursing Students**

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WHEREAS, The Iowa Department of Natural Resources stated in an article titled “Household Sharps Disposal,” that “The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that each year, 8 million people across the country use more than 3 billion needles, syringes and lancets (also called sharps) to manage medical conditions at home” (Johnson, 2009); and

WHEREAS, Sharps are used to treat various illnesses in the household such as diabetes, allergies, arthritis, cancer, Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, infertility, migraines, Multiple Sclerosis, Osteoporosis, Psoriasis (Johnson, 2009); and

WHEREAS, An article published by the Society of General Internal Medicine states that, “In a survey of 44 diabetic patients receiving care at our practice 86% reported improper disposal. Shockingly, 7% of patients reported disposing of their used sharps by flushing them through the toilet” (Costello & Parikh, 2013); and

WHEREAS, Costello and Parikh (2013) identified lack of education received from physicians as a vital contributor to improper sharps waste disposal. With the proper education and a sharps disposal program implemented they had “between eight and ten patients bringing in their used sharps each month” (Costello & Parikh, 2013); and

WHEREAS, There are various disposal options, such as mail-back programs, drop-off collections sites, household hazardous waste collection sites, residential special waste pickup services, syringe exchange programs for disposal methods, and home needle destruction devices (Community Options for Safe Needle Disposal, 2012, p. 2); and

WHEREAS, Markkanen et. al. (2015) mentions that OSH has guidelines for the workplace on choosing sharp containers that are too extensive for consumers to comprehend. This article suggests that a similar, simplified version be produced to educate consumers on how to select and properly use sharps containers. These teachings could be incorporated by the FDA in the requirements for drug labeling (Markkanen et. al., 2015, p. 10); and

RESOLVED, that the Iowa Association of Nursing Students (IANS) promotes the education of safe proper sharps disposal in the community by holding a breakout session on this topic at the next convention, if, feasible; and be it further

RESOLVED, that IANS promotes the awareness of the various sharps disposal programs available to sharps users in the community by using [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org), if feasible, and be it further

RESOLVED, that IANS and nursing schools in Iowa promote the importance of patient teaching on sharps disposal by physicians and nurses in healthcare facilities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that IANS send a copy of this resolution to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Iowa Department of Education, the Association of Community Health Nursing Education, the Association of Public Health Nurses, the Iowa Nurses Association, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, and all others deemed appropriate by the NSNA Board of Directors.