The Alabama Board of Nursing has proposed three pieces of legislation, sponsored by Representative April Weaver (R-Alabaster) and Senator Gerald Dial (R-Lineville), designed to enhance our ability to ensure safe nursing practice and protect the public. All three were before the Legislature during the 2017 Regular Session, but were not passed prior to adjournment. Following is a brief overview of each:

**HB64/SB96 - Peace Officer Authority for ABN**

The Board has again approved a proposal which would grant the ABN’s investigators the powers of peace officers for purposes of investigating complaints against licensees. The ABN currently employs an excellent and qualified investigative staff. However, though each of our investigators is a former member of a law enforcement agency such as a local police department, as ABN employees, they are not designated as law enforcement officers. This creates a number of difficulties.

In particular, many designated sworn law enforcement agencies will not share investigative files with non-sworn personnel. The practical effect of this is that the ABN may not learn for months or even years that a nurse has been engaging in criminal or other activity that might have required discipline against the nurse’s license. As this current arrangement directly hinders the Board’s primary missions of ensuring safe nursing practice and protecting the public, it has been identified by both the Board and the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts as a significant issue that needs to be addressed.

Throughout the process, interested parties have forward with concerns or recommendations for improvement to the bill. Through collaborative relationships, Board staff has been able to reach agreement on these provisions and each has received broad support in committee votes. HB64 and SB96 await final passage in the House and Senate, respectively.

**HB63/SB95 - Allowing Recent Graduates to Participate in the Advanced Practice Loan Repayment Program**

Many of our licensees are familiar with the Advanced Practice Loan Repayment Program, which the Legislature created during the 2016 Regular Session. The Program expands access to health care in rural Alabama by granting loans to prospective CRNPs, CNMs, and CRNAs who agree to work in a rural area for a specified amount of time following graduation.

The Program has been well-received so far, but there is room for improvement that should significantly impact the quality of patient care. As originally enacted, a minor flaw in the drafting of the bill led to an opinion from the Alabama Attorney General’s office which bars recent graduates from participating. We attempted to address this issue during the 2017 Regular Session with a bill that would have amended the existing law to open up the program to advanced practice nurses who graduated from their programs within five years prior to the loan cycle.

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As every Alabama advanced practice nurse knows, the Alabama Nurse Practice Act requires most CRNPs and CNMs to engage in collaborative practice with at least one physician licensed to practice in the state. To facilitate these arrangements, the Board of Nursing and the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners (ALBME) each maintain a database reflecting the current collaborative agreements on file with ABN and ALBME for each nurse or doctor, respectively.

It is vital that each nurse in collaborative practice maintain current and accurate information on file with Board. Anytime you cease active collaboration with a specific physician, for instance, you must notify the Board, to ensure that you are working under a valid collaboration.

Manage your collaborations quickly and easily through My Profile on the Board website. My Profile allows APRNs to manage, modify, or terminate collaborations from the advanced practice dashboard. Please take some time and review your individual profile to ensure that the Board has an accurate accounting for all active collaborations. Modifying or terminating a collaboration requires no fee, just a little time and attention.

The Board and staff routinely review provisions of the ABN Administrative Code, to ensure that rules are consistent with each other, with the Nurse Practice Act, and with public protection. This process often leads to rule changes and the past few months have been no different. A brief description of recent proposals follows:

For over 15 years, Board rules have required RNs and LPNs to renew their licenses prior to December 1, in order to avoid a $150 penalty for Late Renewal. At the time the rule was enacted, the Board’s staff was logistically unable to process the volume of nurses filing paper applications at the end of the year.

However, the Board’s transition to an all-electronic licensure process has rendered the requirement for early licensure obsolete. Recognizing this, the Board voted in January to put forth a revision to Chapter 610-X-4, eliminating the December Late Renewal period and allowing licensees to renew through December 31 without penalty.

The Alabama Administrative Procedure Act requires the Board to offer the public 35 days to comment on the rule, prior to certifying it as final. The rule takes effect 45 days after the Board’s official certification has been filed with the appropriate agency.

The comment period for this proposal closes on March 7, 2018, at 4:30 p.m., and the Board will make a final decision on the proposal at the March 16 Board meeting. If you would like to share your thoughts on the proposal, please email abn@abn.alabama.gov. We welcome the input and look forward to hearing from you.
Governor Kay Ivey has appointed four nurses to new four-year terms as members of the Alabama Board of Nursing. Cheryl Bailey, BSN, MBA, RN - who will serve as Board President for 2018 - and Gladys Davis Hill, MSN, RN, have been reappointed to the positions they held for the previous four years. Joining them are two new members - Janice Seip, RN, CRNA, and Cara W. Floyd, LPN.

Cheryl Bailey, MBA, BSN, RN
Cheryl was raised in Birmingham, Alabama, and has lived in Cullman, Alabama, for the past 26 years. She earned her BSN degree from Auburn University and an MBA from the University of North Alabama. Cheryl has been an RN since 1988, working in Emergency, Maternity, Education, and serving the most recent 16 years as Chief Nursing Officer at Cullman Regional Medical Center. She has served on numerous committees and other Boards, most recently as Past President of the Alabama Organization of Nurse Executives. She and her husband, Paul, have two daughters.

She serves in a Nursing Practice position on the Board.

Cara W. Floyd, LPN
Ms. Floyd is a graduate of Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa, AL in General Business Education and Practical Nursing. She has been employed as a Licensed Practical Nurse in the Tuscaloosa area for over 34 years. She has extensive experience in nursing, including OB-GYN, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Urgent Care and Oncology/Hematology. Ms. Floyd is an active member of the Licensed Practical Nurses Association of Alabama (LPNAA) Chapter 6 and serves as LPNAA’s State Treasurer since elected 7/15/2017. She also is a member of NSO – Nurses Service Organization. Ms. Floyd has been employed as a Clinic Nurse at Cancer Care Center of Tuscaloosa with Dr. Shelby Sanford since 2006. She serves as Clinic/Office Nurse for Medical Oncology/Hematology and Radiation Oncology. She still lives in and loves her small hometown of Gordo, Alabama. She has two daughters, Courtney and Hannah. Ms. Floyd is a “MiMi” to two grandchildren, Brady and Baby Dailey.

She serves in an LPNAA position on the Board.
GOVERNOR IVEY APPOINTS BOARD MEMBERS TO NEW TERMS

Gladys Davis Hill, MSN, RN
Ms. Hill studied Pre-Nursing at Spring Hill College and completed her BSN degree at the University of Alabama, later earning an MSN degree from Mississippi University for Women. She has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in nursing and nursing education. Since 1984, Ms. Hill has served as an instructor and administrator at Shelton State Community College, where she has served as Assistant Dean of Health Services since 2004. In addition, she has contributed to the nursing profession through service and affiliation with West Central AHEC Board of Directors, “80×20” Nursing Task Force, Program Evaluator for ACEN, Alabama College System Health Advisory Committee, Evaluator for Nurse Aide Certification, NACES Plus Inc., National League for Nursing, Alabama League for Nursing, and the Alabama Council of Professional Nursing Education. Ms. Hill is an active member of Weeping Mary Baptist Church. She is married to Jerome Hill and has two sons, Michael and Ellis.

She serves in a Nursing Education position on the Board.

Janice Seip, CRNA, RN
Janice Seip, a native of Montgomery, is a 1981 BSN graduate of the University of Alabama-Huntsville. Her first nursing position was in labor and delivery at Charleston (WV) Area Medical Center (CAMC). Upon graduation from CAMC School of Nurse Anesthesia in 1987, she moved her family to Pennsylvania, her husband’s home state, where she worked her first CRNA position in a small Philadelphia hospital. In 1989, they returned to Montgomery, Alabama, where Janice was employed in a large group practice at Jackson Hospital for 12 years. She also worked independently in Montgomery for a small eye surgical center for over 11 years. Lured by adventure, Janice and her husband Rob moved to Colorado Springs in 2012, where she helped set up and establish an anesthesia group in a thriving endoscopy center, serving as Lead CRNA for over four years amongst a physician staff that had never worked with CRNAs. In 2016, Janice again got a call to come home and has returned to the original Jackson group she left seventeen years earlier.

Janice enjoys all aspects of anesthesia and brings a broad and deep range of nursing anesthesia experience to the Board, in terms of technique, supervision, medical specialty, and geography. She and her husband have been married for 31 years and have two adult children. Janice’s passions include water sports and working with young people on interviewing and clinical skills.

She serves in an Advanced Practice (CRNA) position on the Board.