

The Alabama Board of Nursing **NSGHTS**

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Purposeful Engagement: Roles and Responsibilities of Nursing Organizations

Peggy Sellers Benson, MSN, RN, MSHA, NE-BC Executive Officer

Since assuming the role of Executive Officer, I have had the opportunity to travel the state participating in public events and offering educational presentations to various audiences of nurses, nurse educators, other healthcare staff, and nursing leaders. At these events, I am often asked many questions related to nursing advocacy. This is a growing concern, as the nursing profession comes into its own in the arena of policy.

As primary direct patient care providers, nurses are afforded both the opportunity and the burden of understanding the most fundamental obstacles to quality care. Our roles give us unique perspectives that are vital to planning the future of healthcare through advocacy and public development.

Unfortunately, though, most of us are more comfortable with a Pyxis than parliamentary procedure, so communicating those perspectives in the halls of power can be a challenge. In this series, we seek to help our licensees develop competencies for patient advocacy in the public policy space, beginning



with an understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of nursing organizations.

As nurses, the Board of Nursing often is the first nursing organization we have contact with following graduation. After all, the Board is the place where we apply for our nursing licenses, so it is through the Board that we first earn the privilege of calling ourselves "Nurses," whether we are RNs or LPNs.



Alabama Board of Nursing Insights

Purposeful Engagement: Roles and Responsibilities of Nursing Organizations

Peggy Sellers Benson, MSN, RN, MSHA, NE-BC **Executive Officer**

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Personally, I worked hard for my degree and for my license, so the Alabama Board of Nursing (ABN) made an impression on me that has lasted more than four decades.

However, while the ABN is obviously one organization that is highly visible and important to nurses, the Board is a government agency tasked with very specific roles. First and foremost, the ABN was created to implement and enforce the Alabama Nurse Practice Act (NPA). including:

· Ensuring the quality of educational preparation for LPNs and RNs, including advanced practice nurses;

· Licensing all classes of nurses, as well as issuing permits for Medication Assistants, Certified (MACs) and Student Nurse Apprentices (SNA);

· Establishing standards of nursing practice

 Investigating potential violations of the NPA and applying discipline to licenses where it is warranted; and

• Providing continuing education (CE) for nurses.

The Board exists to protect the public by licensing individual healthcare providers, to regulate the practice of those individual providers, and to ensure the quality of patient care by eliminating barriers to competent, effective practice. The ABN is not empowered to get involved in employment issues such as staffing, patient assignments, shift policy, or patient ratios, etc.

You may ask, "if the Board of Nursing doesn't advocate for these issues, does anyone?" The answer is "yes." Several state and national nursing professional and specialty organizations specifically exist to advocate for nurses on political, practical, and employment issues. In our state alone, we have a state nurses association, multiple LPN associations, associations for each advanced practice role, and numerous practice specialty organizations ranging from mental health to emergency nurses and beyond.

If you are interested in getting involved in policy advocacy for nurses and nursing, and I hope that you are, I encourage you to explore the many existing organizations in the state to find the right fit for you. Your insights could be the key to unlocking the future for Alabama nurses and the patients they so dutifully serve. I appreciate every single nurse in the state and welcome your contributions to the public policy arena.

Editor's note: Although not exhaustive, the Alabama Nursing Resource Center (ANRC) has links to various state, national, and specialty nursing organizations. We encourage you to explore the links to these nursing entities. And if you know of one that we do not have on our list, please let us know.

Nursing Professional Organizations on **ANRC Webpage**





SAVE THE DATE

The Alabama Board of Nursing MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE







IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of our friend and colleague, Denise Elliott, PhD, RN, CNE. Denise was a distinguished nurse educator who had given decades of her life to preparing future nurses, as an educator, program director, and, most recently, as a nurse consultant in the ABN Nursing Education Programs Department. We extend our sincere condolences to Denise's family. She will be missed.

The ABN's Leadership Institute

LaDonna M. Patton, MSN, RN, CEN, FRE Director of Nursing Professional Development

Last year, the ABN launched its Leadership Institute with a focus on six leadership competencies. It has been known for years that ineffective communication contributes to healthcare errors, so effective communication and conflict resolution are two of the key topics included in many of the online courses. Additional important subjects in the courses emphasize collaboration to manage relationships as well as proficiency in nursing regulation. It is crucial that nurse leaders, at any level, are able to communicate collaboratively to avoid conflict while advocating for patients, which often has some foundation in regulation. This could be reviewing or establishing a facility policy to set expectations for patient care activities. These foundational skills are important to develop critical thinking which fosters innovative leadership. If we've learned anything since 2020, it's that we live in a different world now, and having the ability to analyze problems and synthesize information from diverse sources is necessary to manage change and drive workplace transformation.



The Leadership Institute consists of three tiers, and each tier has three components: (1) completion of the online classes (2) completion of the Applied Leadership Activity and (3) attendance at an ABN event. As you know, the ABN hosted two Leadership events last year and is already planning the Leadership event for 2023. ABN staff are actively working to complete the remaining online classes for the organizational tier, so if you're looking to create dynamic change within your career, your workplace, and in patient care practices, the ABN's Leadership Institute is a good place to begin.



Leadership Institute

START YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY TODAY!

01

Complete the online CE courses (available in <u>My Profile</u> for nurses who have an Alabama nursing license).

03 Complete the Applied Leadership Activity.

02

Submit the enrollment form after completing the online CE courses for each tier: <u>Individual</u>, <u>Team</u>, & <u>Organization</u>.

04 Attend an ABN-sponsored Workshop or Conference.



abn.alabama.gov/leadership-institute/ (334) 293-5200 770 Washington Avenue Montgomery, AL 36104



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ABN and the 2023 Regular Legislative Session



Honor L. Ingels

Administrative Director ABN Center for Nursing Excellence

With the 2023 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature set to convene on Tuesday, March 7, the Alabama Board of Nursing (ABN) will be advocating for legislation intended to expand access to care throughout the state. The following is a brief synopsis of issues of concern:

• Enhancing the Loan Repayment Program for Advanced Practice Nursing (APRN Loan Program)

The APRN Loan Program was established by the Legislature during the 2016 Regular Session, and has been a rousing success, placing dozens of APRNs in rural areas of the state. Unfortunately, the state has many needs in areas that are not classified as rural. Accordingly, the Board will be advocating for amendments to the Nurse Practice Act (NPA) to expand the program to include healthcare provider shortage areas, regardless of whether the areas are rural or urban. This will allow the Board to ensure that these advanced practice nurses can help wherever the people of the state need them.

Establishing a Loan Repayment Program for Nurse Educators

Our nation is facing a healthcare workforce shortage, and Alabama is no exception. While the state is home to many excellent nursing education programs preparing thousands of new nurses each year, we still need thousands more.

Unfortunately, these programs simply do not have available slots for students, turning away about 3,000 qualified students each year. The chief reason cited for these rejections is a lack of qualified instructors; there simply are not enough instructors to adequately prepare the additional applicants. In an effort to address this instructor shortage, the Board proposes establishing a new loan program for educators.

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ABN and the 2023 Regular Legislative Session

Honor L. Ingels Administrative Director ABN Center for Nursing Excellence

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Similar to the APRN Loan Program, which requires a recipient to work for 18 months in a designated need area for each loan received, this proposed loan program would require recipients to work full-time as nursing faculty at an Alabama college or university for two years per loan received. We are hopeful that proactive steps like this will soon have Alabama serving as a model for nursing education into the future.

Other issues related to nursing which are likely to be topics in any Legislative Session are funding for education and healthcare employers, as well as full practice authority for APRNs. While the Board of Nursing has taken no official position on the latter issue, we continue to believe that the current state of play for advanced practice in the state of Alabama is unsustainable if Alabama is to address the future needs of an aging population. It may soon be time for the state to consider joining the national licensure compact for APRNs to remain competitive with other states in supplying adequate providers to our population.

Please stay tuned to ABN social media accounts, as well as our newsletters and emails, to stay abreast of the latest developments for the Board throughout the Regular Session.

APRN CORNER

Attention: CRNPs and CNMs

You may be aware that the rules for collaborative practice have changed. Effective January 1, 2024, each CRNP or CNM in collaborative practice must complete a series of required regulatory courses related to collaborative practice in Alabama. Board staff is currently completing production of the three required courses, which will be released in the coming weeks. As completion of the courses will be a prerequisite for any CRNP or CNM initiating a new collaboration or renewing APRN approval, we encourage you to complete the courses as soon as you are able, to ensure that there will be no delays in processing future applications.

Please follow the ABN on social media, as well as your emails from the Board, for updates on the release of this education series.





Preparing a Resilient Healthcare Workforce

Abby Migliore, MSN, MBA, RN Administrative Director of Discipline and **Compliance Monitoring**

As nurses, we often think in terms of how a patient feels, what the patient going through, and how we can provide better care to the patient. These are extremely important questions, but could we not ask the same things about ourselves as nurses? Throughout the healthcare sector, workers, including nurses, report increased levels of stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue. As a result, stress on an already strained healthcare community continues to increase.

As leaders in the healthcare community, we must address the needs of the workforce, including that most archetypical of healthcare workers, the nurse. These workers desperately need tools to relieve and reverse the negative effects of the pressure they are under. One important facet of this is developing resilience.

Resilience is defined as the capability to positively cope or respond to difficult or adverse experiences (Baskin & Bartlett, 2021). It is the ability to grow and flourish even through adversity or stressful situations. Resilience allows us to handle challenges effectively and efficiently, as well as to

approach difficult situations in a controlled manner.

Building resilience has been found to assist healthcare workers in combatting negative outcomes, including burnout, compassion fatigue, and anxiety. It is also found to be an indicator of how successfully a person may react to a stressful situation. As a healthcare worker's building stress exceeds the level of the individual's resilience, job performance can be negatively impacted (Baskin & Bartlett, 2021). It is important to look at the health, wellbeing, and resilience of the healthcare community, not only for themselves, but also for the safety and protection of patients.

Resilience can be assessed personally, to determine steps we can take to promote our own wellbeing through techniques to destress, take care of ourselves, build positive relationships with others, and seek help when needed.

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Still, we also must look beyond the individual when considering resilience in the context of a team or the workforce as a whole.

According to Igoe (2020), building a resilient team requires hard work, including abandoning the belief that resilience can only be achieved as an individual. Organizations and leaders can look at ways to build, promote, and sustain a resilient workforce. A resilient team should start with honest communication, assessing the levels of stress, making conscious plans for how to support the workforce, understanding and encouraging team members to ask for help, and even promoting self-care. It is important to foster positive communication styles, learn to give encouragement, show support, and open the dialogue for constructive feedback. As we take active steps in the attempt to make a positive impact, we may see improvement not only in the team's resiliency, but also in fostering safe and effective patient care.

Resources:

Baskin, R. G., & Bartlett, R. (2021, November). Healthcare worker resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic: An integrative review. Journal of nursing management. Retrieved January 9, 2023, from <u>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8420188/</u>

Igoe, K. J. (2020, September 21). How to build-and lead-resilient health care teams during COVID-19. Executive and Continuing Professional Education. Retrieved January 18, 2023, from <u>https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/ecpe/how-to-build-lead-resilient-health-care-teamscovid-19/</u>

World Health Organization. (2019, May 28). Burn-out an "occupational phenomenon": International classification of diseases. <u>https://www.who.int/news/</u> <u>item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases</u>



Alabama Board of Nursing Insights

REGAIN CONTROL RECOVER

ALTERNATIVE TO DISCIPLINE



Voluntary Disciplinary Alternative Program



We offer an alternative to discipline for qualified nurses with issues relating to substance use, mental health, or physical ailments that may inhibit their ability to provide safe nursing care.

Contact Us: www.abn.alabama.gov/vdap/ (800) 656-5318



Follow the **ABN Center for Nursing Excellence** on social media!





ALABAMA BOARD OF NURSING

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