

2015 Advocacy Highlights



**National
Association of
Neonatal
Nurses**

**National Association of
Neonatal Nurse Practitioners**
A division of NANN

APRN Scope of Practice

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first nurse practitioner degree program and the start of the nurse practitioner profession. As we mark this important milestone, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) continue to make strides in the quest for full practice authority in all states across the nation. Currently, 21 states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation enabling APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education and training. There is still much work to be done though. Twelve states have restrictive practice for APRNs and the remaining states require a collaborative agreement with an outside discipline. Be cognizant of legislation allowing full practice authority in your state and become involved. There is power in numbers and each nurse makes a difference.

Bills were introduced in 2015 in the U.S. House and Senate that would allow full practice authority for “covered nurses” in Veterans’ Administration facilities. *Covered nurses* are defined as APRNs and include nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and certified nurse midwives. The House version of the bill adds certified registered nurse anesthetists to the “covered nurse” classification. As of late August, these bills were in committee.

Visit nann.org and nannp.org for updates on APRN Scope of Practice.

Reimbursement for Donor Breast Milk

Despite mounting evidence that breast milk provides many benefits to a premature infant, including the reduction of necrotizing enterocolitis, the Affordable Care Act does not mandate reimbursement for donor breast milk and Medicaid reimbursement is inconsistent from state to state. In spring 2015, Kansas became the most recent state to pass legislation providing Medicaid reimbursement to medical facilities for prescribed, medically necessary donor breast milk. However, only a handful of states reimburse for this beneficial and potentially lifesaving nutritional need.

If your state’s Medicaid program does not reimburse for donor breast milk, you can become involved by contacting your elected officials and educating them on the importance of breast milk for infants with a medical need. Private insurers often follow Medicaid’s lead, so mandated Medicaid reimbursement of donor breast milk is an important first step in providing donor breast milk to infants in your state. For more information, visit the NANN Advocacy homepage for updates and information on contacting your elected official.



Loretta Ford, EdD RN PNP (right), was the cofounder of the first nurse practitioner program at the University of Colorado in 1965.

Image courtesy of the Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing (www.nursing.upenn.edu/history). Used with permission.

Protecting Our Infants Act

The incidence of opioid dependence in pregnant women and, as a result, neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) has been rising steadily in the United States. NAS infants comprise a larger portion of our NICU census each year but the true scope of the problem remains unclear.

The Protecting Our Infants Act (POIA) is a bipartisan bill jointly introduced in the House and Senate in March 2015. If passed, the legislation would require the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to report on prenatal opioid abuse and NAS. The AHRQ report would include case studies, barriers to treatment for pregnant women, evaluation of treatment options for opioid-dependent women and infants, and recommendations for prevention, identification, and treatment of opioid dependence and NAS. In addition, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) would be required to address gaps in research and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would be required to provide assistance to states to develop a monitoring program. POIA would be a start in addressing a growing problem. For updates, visit the NANN Advocacy homepage.

Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act

For more than 50 years, Title VIII funding has played an important role in strengthening the nursing workforce. Funding through Title VIII provides support for students in all levels of nursing education—from associate through doctoral degree programs. House Resolution 2713 would reauthorize Title VIII programs through 2020. Clinical nurse specialists were not previously recognized among the advanced practice nursing roles; however, technical changes have been requested this year to include them so that all four advanced practice roles will be eligible for advanced education nursing grants. In addition, the clinical nurse leader (CNL) also was added to allow those students in a CNL master's degree program to receive grants. NANN supports the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act through the Nursing Community, a coalition of 61 nursing organizations.

Antibiotic Stewardship

Antibiotic resistance results in more than 20,000 deaths each year. Recognizing the growing problem, President Obama issued an executive order in September 2014 establishing the Task Force for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria and required the Task Force to issue an action plan in the first quarter of 2015. The executive order also set up an Advisory Committee to develop recommendations, advance research, and disseminate findings related to antibiotic resistance. It also mandated that DHHS develop regulations surrounding individual hospital antibiotic stewardship programs. The Task Force published a National Action Plan in March 2015.

To date, California stands alone in enacting legislation on the state level. The California Antimicrobial Stewardship Initiative was signed into law in September 2014 and requires healthcare facilities to develop an antimicrobial stewardship policy and a committee.

Antibiotic stewardship has received increasing attention in the NICU, and the NANN Advocacy Committee will be following the topic for future legislative efforts.

The Health Policy and Advocacy Committee (HPAC) in Action

Find NANN's advocacy resources under the Advocacy header on NANN's homepage or at www.nann.org/advocacy/content/advocacy.html.

Involving Members in Advocacy

2015–2016 Advocacy Committee Members: Cindi Acree and Joyce Stein (cochairs), Sherri Brown, Ally Kayton, Myra Rolfes, Stephanie Blake, Julie Sundermeier, Elizabeth Welch-Carre, Robin Jahnke, Vicki Leamy, and Lori Brittingham. The committee monitors health policy and advocacy issues and communicates with the membership about progress and advocacy opportunities on key issues.

Advocacy Education: HPAC has become increasingly involved in NANN's Annual Educational Conference. The 2015 conference advocacy activities include a roundtable breakfast forum on health policy and advocacy, a concurrent session provided by a current HPAC member entitled "Advocacy—What Is It?" and the HPAC booth in the exhibit hall. NANN members are encouraged to follow the activities of HPAC on the NANN website and in the MyNANN community.

NANN/NANNP on the Hill

Nurse in Washington Internship (NIWI): NANN sponsors two members annually to attend NIWI. In March 2015, Denise Easley and Ally Kayton attended the program. They are sharing their newfound knowledge through individual advocacy and Ally's participation on HPAC. If you are interested in a NANN sponsorship, visit www.nann.org/advocacy.

Looking Ahead: 2016 Advocacy Issues and Priorities

- Virtual Lobby Day
- Antibiotic Stewardship
- Donor Breast Milk Reimbursement
- Advocacy Webinar
- Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome