

## NANN Advocacy Agenda (2021)

The National Association of Neonatal Nurses (NANN) is dedicated to advocating at the local, state, and federal level for optimized care and positive health outcomes for neonates and their families. As the leader in neonatal nursing, NANN seeks to support and enhance legislation that improves the lives of the most vulnerable population.

### **Disparities Within Neonatal Care**

There are numerous studies demonstrating racial and ethnic health disparities in preterm birth, NICU outcomes, and infant mortality. Three contributors to health disparities have been described: increased risk for pre-term birth, lower quality of care, and socioeconomic disadvantages. NANN strongly believes that all infants, regardless of race, parental economic or educational status, or geographic area should receive equitable, quality healthcare.

### **COVID-19 Impact on Patients and Nurses**

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on patients and frontline providers has been tremendous. Many studies document the overall health impact of the pandemic, inclusive of mental, physical, and emotional consequences on patients and nurses. Depression, anxiety, and fear were common trends manifesting into physical ailments. NANN strongly believes in the holistic wellbeing of the nurse and patient and supports measures to improve and maintain good health.

### **Mental Health of NICU Families and Nurses**

NANN believes strongly in supporting the mental health of NICU families and nurses. During these unprecedented times, there is even more reason to advocate and highlight the care and keeping of oneself, and to emphasize erasing any stigma associated with mental health issues. Taking time for oneself as a NICU parent, partner, or family member with the birth of an infant in an unexpected NICU stay, is a challenge. NANN acknowledges the stress and emotions to keep life normal, bond and welcome their new infant into their family. Neonatal nurses should feel empowered to advocate and care for themselves holistically. NANN supports the well-being of neonatal nurses.

### **Nursing Workforce Development**

The continued development of the nursing workforce is critical to the health of our country. Through research, education, expansion of access to healthcare facilities and providers, and funding directly connected to meeting the nursing profession's pressing needs, NANN advocates for the entire nursing community.

### **Paid Family Leave**

Paid family leave (PFL) establishes a safety net for working individuals when medical needs arise. PFL gives people the ability to earn all or a portion of their income, so they are able to take time away from work to care for themselves or a family member due to health needs. Paid family leave can include time to address a serious medical condition or a significant health event such as pregnancy (medical) and the



care of a newborn. Paid leave is a critical tool to invest in the physical and mental health of the parents and infant. Providing financial support through paid leave is supportive of healthier pregnancies, better birth outcomes, increases in successful breastfeeding, and improved physical and mental health in the postpartum period for both parents and infant.

### **Nutrition and Breastfeeding**

The nutrition provided by breast milk (expressed or donor) plays an important role in the healthy development of the infant, with studies showing it is the best option for infant nutrition. Breastfeeding can also help to establish the relationship between an infant and its nursing parent. NANN supports the need for access and education to information on breastfeeding, thereby encouraging that breastfeeding is a preferable choice to ensure optimal nutritional and emotional health of infants.

