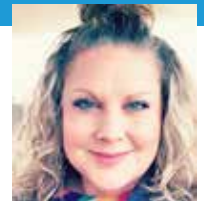


Preparing for 2025: Iowa Nurses Association's Advocacy and Legislative Priorities



Kate Pace, BSN, RN, Chair, INA Public Policy Committee

As we approach the upcoming 2025 legislative session, the Iowa Nurses Association (INA) has been hard at work throughout the summer addressing critical nursing issues in Iowa. Our policy committee continued meeting regularly during the summer months, ensuring that we maintained momentum while refining our legislative priorities. In September, we returned to our regular meeting schedule, ready to further develop strategies for the coming year.

We are excited to build upon the strong engagement demonstrated at the INA Annual Conference, where we had an impressive turnout and meaningful conversations about the most pressing issues facing Iowa nurses. The conference served as a springboard for our ongoing advocacy efforts, and we are hopeful that the same energy will carry into the legislative session in 2025. Our focus remains clear: to identify and advance policies that enhance the nursing profession and improve patient outcomes across Iowa. We have established three main legislative priorities that will guide our efforts and shape our advocacy in the coming session.

The 2025 legislative priorities continue to be a work in progress but are close to being finalized. We will be focusing on 3 main priorities

1. Violence Against Nurses

Violence in healthcare settings is a growing issue that directly impacts nurse safety, retention, and overall job satisfaction. The INA remains committed to advocating for comprehensive measures that address violence against nurses. We will push for legislation that mandates stricter penalties for assaults against healthcare workers, implements more rigorous workplace safety protocols, and pro-

vides resources for nurses to receive adequate support following violent incidents. This initiative aims not only to protect nurses but also to ensure a safer environment for patients and healthcare teams.

2. Workforce Issues:

Mandatory overtime remains a critical issue for nurses across Iowa, impacting both patient safety and nurse well-being. The INA has consistently heard from nurses about the detrimental effects of extended hours, which contribute to burnout, increased error rates, and compromised patient care. To address this, INA is actively advocating for regulations that limit the number of consecutive hours a nurse can be required to work, aiming to establish safer workplace standards.

We are aligning our efforts with the American Nurses Association (ANA), which emphasizes that "mandatory overtime is unsafe for nurses and for their patients." The ANA has long advocated for policies that protect nurses' well-being and ensure patients receive high-quality care. The ANA maintains that "mandatory overtime is an unacceptable solution to staffing challenges," stressing the need for policies that set clear limits on shift length, ensure proper breaks, and regulate overtime to support both nurse health and patient safety. By mirroring the ANA's national priorities, INA aims to create a safer, more sustainable work environment for Iowa's nurses, ensuring they can provide the best care possible without compromising their own health.

3. Nursing Education:

ARNP Preceptor Tax Incentive Bill
Advancing nursing education is cru-

cial to sustaining Iowa's nursing workforce and meeting future healthcare demands. One of our top educational priorities for the 2025 session is to support the reintroduction of the ARNP Preceptor Tax Incentive Bill. This proposed legislation offers tax incentives to licensed Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) who serve as preceptors for nursing students, addressing critical barriers to preceptorship.

Preceptors play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between academic learning and hands-on clinical practice, yet finding willing preceptors remains a significant challenge in Iowa. Several barriers have been identified through current literature, regulatory agencies, and academic program data, including limited time to supervise students, inadequate patient load adjustments, insufficient interaction with students, decreased productivity while precepting, and the perception that precepting should be a professional obligation rather than a supported role.

The Iowa ARNP Preceptor Tax Credit initiative seeks to address these barriers by providing financial incentives to ARNPs who mentor students. This initiative aims to not only retain existing preceptors but also attract new ARNPs to precept, thereby increasing the availability of high-quality clinical placements for students. Expanding these opportunities will improve training experiences and ultimately enhance healthcare access for Iowa residents. The incentive will also help distribute the precepting workload more equitably, reducing burnout among current preceptors. For example, we have a case of one preceptor currently supervising three students simultaneously, underscoring the need

for broader participation among ARNPs.

This initiative aligns with the Quadruple Aim of Healthcare—enhancing patient experience, improving population health, reducing costs, and improving the work life of healthcare providers. By increasing the pool of qualified preceptors, the bill supports the growth of Iowa's nurse practitioner workforce, ultimately benefiting both healthcare providers and patients across the state.

Since being elected to the Iowa Nurses Association as a board member in 2016, I have had the honor of working alongside some of Iowa's top nursing leaders to enhance the nursing profession across the state. My most recent assignment as

Director of Public Policy has been both a privilege and a remarkable opportunity to contribute to meaningful change. Throughout my tenure, I have witnessed the dedication and passion of nurses committed to improving not only their profession but also the health outcomes of Iowans.

Advocating for nursing issues has been a deeply fulfilling experience, and I am proud of the strides we have made together. Our efforts have not only strengthened the nursing profession but also shaped policies that have a direct impact on patient care and public health across Iowa. As we move into 2025, I am inspired by the continued collaboration and com-

mitment of our members. I encourage every nurse to engage with INA's legislative efforts, as our collective voice is what drives change and ultimately enhances the care we deliver to Iowans.

Call to Action

As we enter the 2025 legislative session, we need the active support of every nurse in Iowa. Your voice matters, whether through advocacy, engaging with legislators, or sharing your experiences with these issues. Together, we can influence policies that protect and advance the nursing profession while ensuring quality care for all Iowans. Let's make 2025 a pivotal year for nursing in Iowa. ■

Stage Set for 2025 Legislative Session

THE TABLE IS NOW SET for the 2025 Iowa Legislative Session, which will begin on January 13, 2025. Republicans now have a supermajority in both chambers of the Iowa Legislature, picking up one seat in the Senate (35 Rs, 15 Ds) and gaining three in the House (67 Rs, 33 Ds).

You can view the full legislative report on our website by [clicking here](#). Topics covered include:

- Iowa Senate and House election outcomes
- New Faces, Capitol Experience
- Looking Ahead to 2025
- The Upcoming Funding Dilemma
- Leadership & Committees

What Can YOU Do? As your lobbyists, there is only so much we can do as two people at the State Capitol. There are 150 legislators, and the best way to get their support for INA issues is to have members talk to them. That means:

- Finding out [who represents you](#) in the Iowa House and Iowa Senate.
- Connecting with them before or early in session – especially if they are new.
 - This could be a nice note of congratulations, asking them to meet.
 - You could [email them](#) to let them

know your priorities.

- Take a few friends to have coffee with your legislators (you'll be less awkward and have more power with greater numbers).
- Ask them to put you on their newsletter email list.
- Give them your contact information so they can connect with you later.
- Go to their [public forums](#) (list updates begin in January).

- [Let us know](#) what they said! We can then follow up with them at the Capitol.

The one thing we know that motivates legislators is the personal stories they hear from constituents in their district. For example, many legislators do not understand the dynamics of workplace violence that nurses face. They are always surprised when they hear about these encounters, and it motivates them to do something about it. If more nurses told their stories to more legislators, we would have a much better chance of getting the attention your issues deserve at the State Capitol. Look for more ideas as we move into session — and please know that your emails and legislative connections **do make a difference!** ■