

SCNA Participation at the State of Reform Conference in Charleston, SC

The State of Reform Conference held October 2, 2024, in Charleston, South Carolina, brought together healthcare professionals, policymakers, and advocates from across the state to engage in critical conversations about the future of healthcare. Among the esteemed panelists was SCNA's very own Teshieka K. Curtis-Pugh, Executive Director of the South Carolina Nurses Association (SCNA). Her participation highlighted the importance of nursing advocacy and the vital role nurses play in the healthcare workforce.

T.K. Curtis-Pugh, a respected voice in the healthcare community, served on a panel focused on health reform and the evolving role of nurses in meeting the complex demands of modern healthcare systems. As a champion of nursing innovation and patient-centered care, she spoke on the importance of expanding access to healthcare, especially in underserved communities, and highlighted the need for ongoing advocacy to address the many challenges nurses face in today's dynamic environment.

One of the key points of discussion was how healthcare reform policies directly impact nurses and the overall healthcare workforce. Curtis-Pugh emphasized that nurses, who are often on the front lines of care delivery, bring essential insights that can shape policy decisions. She underscored the need for stronger collaboration between nurses, healthcare leaders, and policymakers to ensure that reforms address workforce shortages, equitable access to care, and improvements in health outcomes across South Carolina. She also shared the necessity of the expansion of Nurse Practitioner's scope. "Expanding the scope of Nurse Practitioners in South Carolina by removing collaborative agreements allows these highly educated and



highly trained professionals to work at the top of their licensure and education. Collaborative agreements do not prevent clinicians from operating outside of their scope of practice, they limit them from operating at their best. NPs are not trying to be surgeons; they are trying to make a difference in their communities. The primary care space, the medical spa space, wellness clinics, urgent care, rural health, all these spaces can be positively impacted by allowing them to work truly autonomously," Curtis-Pugh stated.

As SCNA continues to lead the charge for nursing in South Carolina, SCNA's involvement in the State of Reform

Conference reinforces the association's commitment to being at the forefront of healthcare reform. Our participation highlighted the invaluable perspective nurses bring to the table in shaping a more efficient, inclusive, and patient-centered healthcare system.

The SCNA remains dedicated to supporting nurses and ensuring their voices are heard in important conversations like those taking place at the State of Reform Conference. With strong leaders representing the association, SCNA will continue to advocate for the nursing profession, striving for a healthier and more equitable future for all South Carolinians. ■