

for their organization or to the general nursing public. Currently, there are 16 Approved Provider Units with CNA. 2024 data shows that the Colorado Nurses Association has supported over 700 nursing activities with these units. The final numbers will be available in spring 2025.

If you have an interest in supporting

this work, the Approver unit is always interested in connecting volunteer nurses with a BSN or higher, who have an active nursing license, and a passion for supporting nurses in all arenas with the reviews of these applications. Please join us. The time commitment is generally 5-10 hours per month. One-on-one training is available.

Contact Nan Morgan, MS, RN at programdirector@ColoradoNurses.org for more information, any questions you have or to apply by sending an email.

Nursing Continuing Professional Development Advisory Council – Colorado Nurses Association ■

“If You Don’t Like Something, Change It”

Mark Longshore, PhD, RN

That quote from Maya Angelou is a great opener for why nurses should be more involved in health policy work. There are 80,000 nurses in Colorado. When asked why nurses are not more involved in health policy work, nurses often say they don't know how. This article is a primer on how to get started.

First, do not think health policy starts and ends with the government. In 2022, CNA helped pass HB22-1401 which sets up staffing committees at Colorado hospitals. Many hospitals also have workplace violence prevention committees and nursing practice committees. Your employer may have other nursing related groups. These are all great places to learn more about the issues in your organization and have a direct impact on changing those workplace policies, including the latest evidence on a swallowing assessment or how to support nurses after workplace violence.

When it comes to the government, look to both the legislative and executive branches. Colorado's legislative session runs January 8th to May 7th, 2025. When bills come up, the legislators look to you to share your stories with the appropriate committee (not the full House or Senate chamber). That testimony can be in person, written, or virtual. (<https://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2024A/comsumm.nsf/signIn.xsp>) When providing testimony, describe how the bill or subject being discussed has impacted you, your

patients, or your community. For example, in 2023, a number of letters were written both by patients and healthcare providers to advocate for more affordable epi-pens. Without such testimony, legislators would be unaware that some people must forego having a life-saving “auto-injector” due to the cost of replacing this drug. Our legislators are discussing and passing bills on topics about which they know very little, so they need you to help them decide what to pass.

The bill tracker is on the website under “Advocacy.” We also ask that you keep an eye out for messages from us. We post to MyCNA (get registered on MyCNA), send out messages in the weekly newsletter, and sometimes reach out via email, especially to those 100 for 100 nurses who have relationships with their legislators. If we reach out to you, please share your story and make change happen.

The executive branch operates all year and for nurses primarily means the Board of Nursing, although there are other groups with which CNA interacts. When a state agency makes changes to regulations, they are required to post a notice to stakeholders describing what rules are being considered for change. Most recently, a change to the prescriptive authority mentorship rules was made in response to testimony by CNA, AANP, and many APRNs who shared their own story and those of others on how the proposed rules would impact

their employment. In response to that testimony, the Board made a small but meaningful change to the rules. Nurses sharing their stories helped change policy.

The Colorado Nurses Association has several groups that advocate for policy change. The most well-known is the Government Affairs and Public Policy Committee. All CNA members are encouraged to attend those meetings and speak about legislative matters. There is also the Workplace Advocacy A.N.T. which looks at workplace issues like violence, staffing, and nurse wellness. The Nursing Education A.N.T looks at issues within nursing education, such as a lack of preceptors, while the Rural Nursing A.N.T explores issues unique to nurses working in rural areas. And the Research A.N.T has been indispensable as they gather information on many of the topics followed by the other A.N.Ts. All of these meetings and events are listed on the CNA website meetings calendar and all members are encouraged to join in the discussions. These A.N.Ts have the added responsibility of informing both the CNA Board of Directors and the GAPP committee to help determine the direction of CNA, again, influencing policy.

There is much more that could be said about getting more engaged in health policy work, but only so much space on the page. Please join a meeting during the legislative session or any other time during the year to learn more. ■