

Nurses Educate Politicians for the Greater Good: A Call to Action for 2025-2026

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In 2025 and 2026, as a new administration outlines its healthcare priorities, nurses get to step into the political arena as powerful advocates for human dignity, patient centered and quality care. Political advocacy is not a partisan issue; it is about ensuring every patient receives the care they need to thrive and become productive members of society. Nurses, who stand at the intersection of patient care and policy, have a unique responsibility to educate legislators on healthcare priorities and push for impactful reforms.

Focus Areas for Political Advocacy

- 1. Addressing Healthcare Quality Through Policy** The incoming administration has signaled a commitment to addressing social determinants of health (SDOH). Nurses must advocate for policies that provide unbiased access to housing, nutritious food, and reliable transportation. By sharing patient stories and clinical data, nurses can illustrate how SDOH directly impact health outcomes, urging lawmakers to invest in community-based programs that promote health through quality outcomes.
- 2. Expanding Access to Affordable Care** Despite advancements in healthcare, many patients remain uninsured or underinsured. Nurses get to push for the expansion of universal healthcare initiatives. These efforts ensure human beings have access to healthcare. When speaking with representatives, highlight the economic benefits of preventive care and reduced hospital readmissions through comprehensive coverage.

- 3. Strengthening Mental Health Resources** The mental health crisis continues to strain the healthcare system. Nurses can educate representatives and their teams to provide funding for mental health services, emphasizing the need for integrated care models that include mental health screenings in primary care settings. Advocacy should also focus on reducing stigma and improving access to quality psychiatric care, by removing advance practice nurses restrictions in practice and allowing the full scope of practice.
- 4. Protecting the Nursing Workforce** To address the need for nurses, advocacy must prioritize workplace safety, fair compensation, and loan forgiveness programs for nursing students. By ensuring a stable and supported workforce, nurses can continue to provide the high-quality care that patients deserve. Educating policymakers on the challenges nurses face—from burnout to inadequate professional development—helps secure funding for retention and recruitment initiatives.

Educating Representatives

To effectively advocate, nurses must build relationships with their elected officials. Here's how:

Visit the American Nurses Association (ANA) website to identify your representatives and access tools for contacting them. The ANA's advocacy section provides a simple search tool to locate your federal and state lawmakers based on your address, along with key legislative priorities to discuss.

- Share Patient Stories:** Personal anecdotes resonate deeply with legislators and put a human face on policy issues.
- Present Data:** Use evidence-based research to highlight the impact of proposed policies on patient outcomes and system efficiencies.
- Collaborate with Professional Organizations:** Join nursing associations to amplify your voice and gain access to advocacy resources.
- Engage in Public Forums:** Attend town halls, write op-eds, and leverage social media to raise awareness about critical healthcare issues.

Conclusion

Nursing advocacy in 2025-2026 transcends politics; it is about safeguarding the fundamental right to health. By championing policies that address health equity, expand access, enhance mental health resources, and protect the workforce, nurses can drive systemic change. Advocacy is rooted in compassion and a commitment to quality care—values that unite us all. It's time for nurses to step up, stand up and speak out, to ensure that the voices of their patients are heard in every corner of government. Together, we can build a healthier, stronger society in the future. ■