

ADVOCATING FOR PRACTICE



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Emergency nursing faces many challenges. Never has it been more important that the voice of emergency nursing be heard. Nursing's collective voice is essential to ensure that our patients, interprofessional colleagues, and the public recognize the difference the nursing profession makes on clinical outcomes. Emergency nurses made an impact on reauthorization of the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMS-C) legislation earlier this year with Day on the Hill visits and testimony at a House of Representatives Health Subcommittee hearing (Figure). We have the power to make a difference; we must be present.

There was great synergy across nursing as a profession when a senator from Washington State failed to understand the value of nursing. Nurses spoke out and made their voices heard. The power and unity of nursing was very positive. Opportunities such as this remind us that what is important to nursing as a profession is important to all nursing specialties. If we are going to play our cards right, in the true meaning of that idiom, we should be sure we do so as a united front focused on how important nursing care is to keeping patients safe with evidence-based outcomes.

Making an impact on the prevalence of workplace violence is important to all members of the health care community. This is especially true for emergency nurses who are subjected to, at a minimum, verbal abuse every shift they

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work. For many years, verbal abuse and, in many cases, physical abuse were accepted as a normal occurrence in emergency care settings. Emergency nurses have shared their stories as they advocate for legislation to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. It is imperative that health care facilities have zero tolerance for workplace violence and provide support to their staff who are victims of this unnecessary evil. We are our own best advocates; we should report all incidents and accept support for best outcomes.

Removing barriers to practice for all emergency nurses is more important than ever before. The American Academy of Emergency Medicine's *Updated Position Statement on Advanced Practice Providers*¹ released earlier this year highlighted the lack of understanding of the education and preparation undertaken by advanced practice nurses and other health care professionals. This document created significant concern related to restricting advanced practice nurses from practicing to the full scope of their education and license, and the position statement did not have any input or involvement from the Emergency Nurses Association. The American Academy of Emergency Physicians convened a similar work group this year to examine use of advanced practice providers in the emergency department with emergency nurses included in the discussion. Although these work products from our professional colleagues with whom we work collaboratively and collegially on a daily basis may not be consistent with the position of the Emergency Nurses Association on the scope of practice for advanced practice nurses (APNs),² we need to be the stimulus for change. We must continue to



FIGURE

Testifying before the House of Representatives Health Subcommittee.

be at the table to collaborate to ensure that our position is heard and considered. The time is overdue for clear emergency care practice, based on the evidence that demonstrates the positive outcomes patients experience when cared for by APNs in emergency care settings. Emergency nurses should articulate the benefits of care from APNs, which include value, clinical outcomes, and patient and staff satisfaction. There is no one better to advocate for removing barriers to full practice than emergency nurses.

As this year draws to a close, it is very clear how important the voice and presence of the emergency nurse is to our health care system, especially our patients. Each of you is extraordinarily important to the profession of emergency

nursing as we continue to advocate at all levels for safe care for our patients and safe workplaces for our peers. Thank you for being committed to care.

REFERENCES

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