POSITION STATEMENT ON POLITICAL ADVOCACY

INTRODUCTION

The International Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Nurses (ISPAN) supports the participation of plastic and aesthetic registered nurses (RNs) in the formation of political policies. The United States’ healthcare delivery system is complex and includes many regulations and laws that dictate how health care providers practice, how health care is financed, and the range of the health care industry (Loversidge, 2016). The need for RNs to become involved in health policy is very powerful because their health care expertise and knowledge of health care systems and societal conditions will allow for the creation of health policy that can improve the quality of life for all individuals (Milstead, 2016b). Public policy plays a role in patient outcomes. There are multiple opportunities for plastic and aesthetic nurses to become involved and contribute to the legislative processes that shape the future of health care (Milstead, 2016a). Public policy plays a role in patient outcomes, and the opportunity to contribute to and shape the future of health care is available to all plastic surgical nurses.

RATIONALE

Promoting political activism among plastic and aesthetic RNs is consistent with the mission of the ISPAN. Plastic and aesthetic nurses are in a position to extend their scope of influence beyond direct patient care. ISPAN strongly advocates for active participation at all levels of politics. Nurses can participate in policy formation as politicians, by serving as liaisons between government officials and their constituents, and by offering the strength of numbers in policy formation. Future patient outcomes depend on the development of effective policies created with input from RNs (Polk, 2016).

ISPAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The plastic and aesthetic nurse should

- promote the incorporation of health policy into nursing education to enhance nurses’ understanding of how to navigate the political system and identify areas where nurses can make the most significant impact in the policy development process (DeLeon, 2016).
- seek out opportunities to interact with elected officials, provide insight into patient concerns, and assist policymakers with understanding the complex issues associated with health care. “The education of nurses puts them in a position of discovering and
acknowledging . . . health system problems that may demand intervention by public policymakers” (Milstead, 2016a, p. 7).

- utilize their status as representative of a large segment of the voting community (Milstead, 2016a) to enlighten and influence elected officials and advocate for policies and regulations that improve the system and benefit patients.
- capitalize on the impact of their numbers to “lead the movement of interprofessional practice, education, and research to the policy arena” (Milstead, 2016a, p. 15).
- collaborate with RNs from other specialties, including dermatology, pediatrics, and oncology, to promote positive patient outcomes through political advocacy (Polk, 2016).
- collaborate with other health care professionals to combine “any and all resources available. . .to bring about a sustained positive outcome for the patient” and the health care system (Polk, 2016, p.262).

REFERENCES


DISCLAIMER

These clinical practice guidelines and/or recommendations and/or other guidance published herein are provided by the ISSPAN to assist practitioners in clinical decision-making. The information should not be relied upon as being complete and should not be considered inclusive of all proper treatments, methods of care, or as a statement of the standard of care. All guidelines and recommendations require periodic revision to ensure that clinicians utilize appropriate procedures, and that the materials encompass the recent critical review of literature and expert opinion. The reader must realize that clinical judgment may justify a course of action outside of the recommendations contained herein.

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