

Nursing's Public Policy Platform

Ensuring Virginians access to sufficient numbers of highly qualified nurses requires an increasing supply of nurses and nursing faculty positioned to educate the future nursing workforce, while maintaining nursing's voice on public policy issues is a top priority. We seek the following commitments from the Commonwealth on behalf of Virginia's more than 104,000 registered nurses who, for the 14th consecutive year, were identified by Americans as the most trustworthy professionals in Gallup's annual "Honesty and Ethics" survey.

1. Enable Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) to contribute to the health care solution by practicing to their full scope of education and training.

APRNs (nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and clinical nurse specialists) have provided safe and effective care in Virginia for more than four decades. Virginia's APRNs currently have barriers to practice which include requirements for a collaborative business agreement with a physician, inability to admit patients into hospice or home health and restrictions on prescription of controlled drugs. The current shortage of primary care physicians and the practice limit restrictions faced by APRNs limits Virginians access to care. Advanced practice registered nurses should be allowed to practice to their full scope of education and training.

2. Increase educational capacity and faculty salaries at the state's schools of nursing in order to ensure an adequate supply of registered nurses to meet the future needs of the residents of the Commonwealth.

An influx of millions of patients in our health care system in the next several years will enhance the nursing shortage. To mitigate this problem, it is imperative that our schools have the capacity to accommodate a growing number of nursing students. In 2007, the Governor submitted a budget request for a 10% increase in nurse faculty salaries at all public colleges and universities. It is imperative, that this again be addressed in order to ensure that Virginia's educational institutions are able to retain existing faculty and compete to attract new faculty.

3. Identify legislative solutions to reduce violence against nurses in the practice setting.

Nurses are three times more likely^{1,2} to experience violence in the workplace than other healthcare professionals. It's imperative that legislative solutions to address this increase in violence against nurses and other healthcare professionals be addressed.

1. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (2006) *Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies and Research Needs*.
2. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (2008) *Traumatic Occupational Injuries*.