

## **Community Health Nursing: Nursing Policy**

Name

Institution

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Nurses have various patient experiences upon which they can use to drive the agenda on public policy. It is the obligation of the nurses to strengthen their skills to enable them to influence public policy so that they can better serve their patients. Therefore, practicing nurses can impact on the public policy through advocacy from a vantage point. According to In Nies and McEwen (2015), the clinical experiences provide nurses with real-life instances that illustrate the patients' needs and the results of public policy on patient mortality and morbidity.

### **Becoming Politically Active**

There are various arenas through which a nurse can establish and use their professional skills to advocate in the community. Nursing advocacy has the aim of persuading the authorities and those in power to meet the needs of the patients and their families. Advocacy in the education and legislative system are examples of ways through which a nurse can become politically active.

According to In Nies and McEwen (2015), nurses can boost the quality of health services by agitating for an enough number of nursing training institutions both at primary and secondary levels. There are instances where a nursing school carries more students than the required ratio, thus compromising the national standards of training. As a result, nurses can share such concerns with the leaders and the community then applies their expertise and knowledge to advocate for change. This political activity could be achieved by engaging with the parents, school principals, school boards, and the teachers. Therefore, a nurse can become politically active by educating the parents, schools, students, and administrators to effect the required change to enhance healthcare for the students in the training system.

The second way through which a nurse can become politically active is through advocacy in the field of legislation. A nurse can provide information to the lawmakers, thus influencing the quality of healthcare legislation. As a member of the nursing profession, one participates in the processes of policy development and, as such has the responsibility of providing accurate and current information. The nurse can achieve this responsibility by discussing factual information obtained through credible research (Stanhope & Lancaster, 2014).

However, the approach should be in such a manner that promotes cooperation with the aim of achieving the desired goals or an acceptable compromise. It is arguably correct that a nurse can be the impetus for the introduction of a new bill in the Senate. Ideally this would mean that the nurse would require finding an elected official who is willing to listen to their idea. A meeting with various legislators could culminate into crafting an appropriate bill. A nurse can facilitate the steps of crafting a medical bill by seeking a sponsor, developing the proposal, and persuading prospective co-sponsors to support the bill by appending their signatures to it. A commitment to this cause would be necessary because, in most instances, the elected officials are not healthcare professionals.

### **Current Childhood Immunization Legislation**

The current childhood immunization legislation for Ohio is the Child Care Immunizations (House Bill 536) (In Nies & McEwen, 2015). The Ohio Chapter drafted the bill with help from the American Academy of Pediatrics. The legislation is written in a language that is appreciated even by laymen and ensures that the law meets the needs of the children of Ohio and the associated healthcare facilities. According to the Network of Care (2015), the bipartisan legislation requires that all children in Ohio be immunized against stipulated diseases before they can attend preschool or licensed day-care. Initially, Ohio was the only state without childhood immunization schedules set for prekindergarten children. Moreover, the legislation requires children to be immunized according to the stipulations of the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention before they can be allowed to attend a home daycare or licensed centers. However, the legislation offers exemptions to childhood vaccination according to medical, personal, or religious reasons.

#### Proposed Changes in the Immunization and Impact on Nursing Practice

Despite the fact that the vaccination legislation gives reasonable mandates for childcare, the exemptions are limiting. It is necessary to remove the requirement that conscientious and religious exemptions to the vaccine should be certified by an advanced practicing nurse, the child's physician, or a physician assistant. The conditions for these exemptions violate their real sense; instead, such exemptions should be certified by the religious leader or personal counselor. Notably, this change would not impact on the nursing practice because the nurse shall offer the vaccine to the required parties. As a nurse, one is mandated to offer the vaccine only as required by law. House Bill 536 is a state legislation because it applies only in Ohio.

#### Conclusion

As a nurse, one has the experience, knowledge and skills to be politically active. This paper has provided instances demonstrating how a nurse can create societal change by being an active political agent for the profession. It has also presented an overview of childhood immunization legislation in the State of Ohio. Thus, it is hoped that the information is sufficient to initiate the desire for nurses to become active politically.

## References

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