

Taking action for change.

A guide to understanding the key nursing issues for the 2007 Georgia General Assembly.

Public Health

As a result of efforts by GNA last year, the House of Representatives set up a study committee to look into various public health issues but most importantly the public health nurse situation. Through the committee's hearings, it became apparent that public health services could not continue without its nurses. In order to attract new nurses and keep those already in the system, Georgia must find a way to increase compensation and formulate an adequate career ladder for public health nurses. GNA is working with legislators during the 2007 General Assembly to find ways to achieve these two goals: *improving public health nurse salaries and finding ways to improve career opportunities for them.*

Nursing Faculty

One of the critical elements in addressing the severe shortage of registered nurses (RNs) in the state is to increase the number of students matriculating through our state's nursing programs. There is no shortage of qualified students applying to nursing schools; the problem is the shortage of qualified nursing faculty. In order to attract new faculty and keep current professors, a more attractive compensation package is needed for nursing educators. The Board of Regents recognizes this need and made funding recommendations consistent with GNA's initiatives *to improve the salaries of nurse faculty in our state's institutions of higher learning.*

Whistle-blowing

One of the toughest problems facing an employee is the dilemma of reporting abuse, fraud and waste in the workplace because of the risk of retaliation by the employer. Reporting these kinds of concerns is commonly called "whistle-blowing." Current law does not usually protect the registered nurse (RN) employees from such retaliation. Responding to a campaign question posed by GNA to our two gubernatorial candidates on this subject, Governor Perdue expressed support for such legislation. GNA is pleased that this support has taken the form of a bill introduced by the Governor's floor leader, Representative Rich Golick, in the form of HB 16. *GNA supports this legislation as it has been introduced.*

APRN Prescribing

After a decade of legislative efforts, GNA was successful during the 2006 General Assembly in passing an APRN prescribing bill. However, the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners, despite strong objections voiced by nursing, public health, hospitals and physicians, passed rules governing the way APRNs prescribe which all but renders last year's bill null and void. *Attempts will be made during the 2007 session to rewrite the APRN prescribing law in a way to overcome these rules and reach the legislative intent of last year's bill.*



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