Advocacy: Option or Mandate?  
What do our Governing Bodies Say?

American Nurses Association  
World Health Organization  
Colorado Nurses Association  
Institute of Medicine  
Florence Nightingale  
National League for Nurses  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing

Results

- Several studies reported positive legislative outcomes secondary to increased involvement by nurses.
- The review of literature revealed a need for increased emphasis on patient advocacy earlier in nursing program curricula.
- Political advocacy and health policy, previously considered appropriate study for graduate curricula, is now a topic that universities are including in undergraduate courses.
- Potential barriers for including political advocacy in undergraduate curricula include negative perceptions of politics, knowledge deficit regarding legislative process, and content saturation.
- There are multiple benefits to incorporating content on political advocacy and health policy in undergraduate nursing curricula. Those benefited by political advocacy include but are not limited to the nursing students, nursing faculty, the division or school of nursing, the university, and the nursing profession as a whole.

Strategies to Empower Students to Shape Public Health Policy

- Traditional Methods
  - Didactic
    - Incorporate the topic of political advocacy in legal/ethics lecture.
  - Clinical
    - Assign a reflection journal entry regarding a health policy or bill up for vote that would help or hinder their patient’s recovery.
    - Have students research and debate a side of a controversial health policy. Examples include the ACA, HPV vaccines, right-to-die laws, etc.
- Nontraditional Methods
  - Service learning projects
  - Social media
  - Student advising/mentoring
  - NSNA
  - Participate in Lobby Days

Conclusion

- There are new and innovative ways to present the topic of advocacy to students. Attempts should be made to introduce health policy and advocacy early in undergraduate nursing curricula through traditional and nontraditional methods.

Do you feel better prepared to incorporate political patient advocacy into your curriculum? If not, let’s talk! awilk613@gmail.com – (717) 413-8445