

January 28, 2019

Governor Gretchen Whitmer  
PO Box 30013  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer:

Congratulations on your installation as our 49th Governor. We commend you for your comprehensive and ambitious agenda to address the healthcare needs of our state's residents and strengthen all aspects of individual, community and economic health. The American Nurses Association-Michigan (ANA-MI) stands with you in support of your health agenda: Get it Done: Healthy Michigan, Healthy Economy. These same issues resonate with the more than 190,000 Michigan nurses and our professional commitment to our patients and communities. We are prepared to actively engage in actions to contribute to the success of your health agenda.

As the most trusted and largest health care professional group, ANA-MI and its constituents are immediately positioned to:

- Provide expert input to efforts to achieve a healthy Michigan.
- Lead and serve on committees, task forces and work groups that address your Health Agenda priorities such as access to healthcare, increasing the number of Registered Nurses, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), improving mental health care and addressing the opioid crisis.
- Bring "real time", on the ground perspective and information to inform strategies and initiatives.
- Disseminate programs, projects and information to engage nurses across the state.
- Actively work with state agencies such as HHS, LARA, Talent Investment, Education, DEQ) to assure the needed nursing workforce is prepared to care for the state's population.

We are embedded in all communities across the state and are closest to the needs of our residents. Nurses are virtually the "canary in the coal mine" and can bring that public health expertise to the work. Some recent exemplars of the significance of nursing presence in communities are found in the Flint water crisis where nurses from all sectors responded by coordinating services, clinics, screenings, prevention and education throughout the community.

It is essential to our state's well-being that nurses are present at policy development tables. To this end, we propose a meeting with you or your staff to further discuss specific ways in which Michigan nurses are prepared to contribute to the success of your Health Agenda.

Respectfully,

Carole Stacy, MSN, MA, RN  
President, ANA-Michigan

ANA-MI and its members submit the following health policy issues in support of Governor Whitmer's Health Policy Agenda: *Get It Done: Health Michigan, Healthy Economy*

**Policy Issue: Expand Access to Health Care/Making Health Care Affordable**

- Increase the number of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) and the scope of practice for the existing 8000 MI APRNs.
  - APRNs can be more rapidly educated and ready to care for MI residents than other primary care providers.
- More efficient use of the existing nursing workforce also expands access to care. For example, use of APRNs reduces emergency room visits and hospital readmissions.
- Michigan is one of the 12 states with greatest limitations on APRN practice for which these nurses are educated and nationally certified.
- APRNs are leaving Michigan for states with less restrictive scope of practice laws.
- Michigan's aging residents are increasing in numbers and will require more care, for longer periods by more nurses.

**ACTIONS REQUESTED**

- 1) Revise the MI Public Health Code to provide full scope of practice for APRNs.
- 2) Remove the restraint of trade for APRNs by adding nurses as a "learned profession" in Michigan's LLC Act (P.A. 23 of 1993). This would allow nurses to form groups and companies to provide direct healthcare services, especially in underserved areas of the state.
- 3) Appoint nurse researchers and practitioners with gerontology expertise to task forces and commissions that focus on older adults.

**Policy Issue: Increase Number of Nurses**

- Patients in all healthcare settings are requiring increasingly more complex care. Employers increasingly prefer to hire baccalaureate degree educated nurses.
  - Nurses are currently educated both in community colleges (2-year Associate Degree programs) and universities (4-year Baccalaureate Degree programs);
  - The Institute of Medicine report recommended that 80% of all nurses be educated at the Baccalaureate degree (BSN) level by 2020. 44% of MI nurses have a BSN.
- The key to producing the number of needed nurses is sufficient nursing faculty to educate them. However, 55% of current nursing faculty are at or approaching retirement age.

**ACTIONS REQUESTED**

- 1) Reinstitute the MI Nursing Corps to support rapid preparation of nursing faculty, especially doctorly prepared educators.

**Issue: Mental Health Funding/New Approach to Mental Health**

- There are an increased number of high-risk individuals who have both mental health and medical conditions and who require comprehensive inpatient and outpatient treatment.
- Psychiatric mental health nurses understand how social determinants of health impact access to care and are prepared to meet individual, family and community needs in a holistic manner.
- Michigan's psychiatric mental health (PMH) nurses are poised to impact improved mental health care and costs.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

- 1) Appoint psychiatric mental health (PMH) nurses to mental and behavioral health commissions, task forces, etc.
- 2) Consider an advanced practice PMH nurse (PhD or DNP) for appointment to the cabinet-level mental health position.
- 3) Provide resources to more rapidly educate more PMH nurses for all mental health venues.

**Investing in Public Health**

- School Nurses: Michigan ranks 47th of the 50 states in the nation for the number of school nurses per student.
  - At a time when there are more medically fragile students and students with chronic health issues such as anaphylactic asthma and diabetes in schools:
    - 800,000 MI public school students attend classes in building without a school nurse.
    - 31 Michigan school districts have 0 school nurses.
    - Michigan has 1 school nurse per 6,570 students; this is 8x the nationally recommended ratio (1 nurse per 750 students).
    - Michigan needs 1,750 school nurses to meet minimum federal recommended staff levels.
- The Nurse Professional Fund (NPF): This fund was established in legislation at the request of nurses in 1988. The funds are voluntarily provided by nurses as additions to their licensing fees. Its purposes are to provide resources to advance the nursing profession and patient care and to provide nursing scholarships.
- The programs and funding were held in common by the MI Department of Community Health (MDCH). Governor Snyder signed an Executive Order in April, 2011, to move all regulatory functions to a single state agency (DLARA). The funding from the NPF was inadvertently transferred to DLARA, but the programming remained in MDCH. DLARA's function is regulatory. The NPF is program based. It is more efficient for programs and funding to be in the same agency.

**ACTIONS REQUESTED**

- 1) Increase the number of school nurses to at least meet the minimum national standard of 1:750 students to school nurse ratio.

- 2) Reinstatement of Nurse Professional Fund program and funds to a single agency (Department of Health and Human Services) in the Office of Nursing Policy. Correct the Executive Order of April, 2011.

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