

Executive Director's Corner

Mark Longshore, PhD, RN



By the time you read this, the 2025 legislative session will be over - at least the regular session. Writing this in March, the Colorado Nurses Association has already supported or opposed about a dozen bills in the state legislature. CNA has provided written or verbal testimony on six bills. When CNA talks, people listen. Members of both the executive and legislative branch have reached out to CNA to request our testimony on their bills. And while the CNA bylaws identify the executive director and board president as the representatives of CNA, sometimes it is better to have other CNA members provide testimony on behalf of Colorado nurses. One example of this was for HB25-1002 when a psychiatric NP provided testimony on the importance of including psychiatric nursing content when defining the standard of psychiatric care. Each of you has unique experiences and knowledge that make you the best person to provide testimony.

Building on the previous sentence, we had a very successful Nurses Day at the Capitol. It was a sold-out day with about 120 registrations from all over Colorado. Those in attendance had the opportunity to observe both the senate and house chambers in action, with some actually sitting "on the floor" of the senate chambers as a guest of Senator Mullica. While it is important to know what happens in the main chambers, nurses make the most impact in the committees - smaller panels of legislators with the goal of hearing testimony and deciding which bills should move on in the process. This was the afternoon experience, with nurses finding what seemed like hidden rooms for both house and senate committee hearings. In between the full chamber and committee work, we heard from the Lt. Governor as she described some of the health and nursing policy work accomplished by the Polis Administration over the past several years. We then participated in a press conference held by Senator Mullica as he introduced his workplace violence prevention bill. Workplace violence continues to be a significant issue for nurses and other health care workers. While the solutions seem elusive, this bill will set up a stakeholder panel to identify both solutions and funding for those solutions. CNA began working with some of those stakeholders last fall and provided feedback to the senator as the bill was developed. Nurses Day at the Capitol is as much action oriented as it is educational. It is our hope the day inspired some of you to be more active in health policy work. And remember, that work includes employer policies, local laws, executive rules, and state and federal laws. CNA and ANA need your help to meet our collective goals.

Perhaps the most important piece of legislation is the one we have not even written - the Nurse Practice Act. In Colorado, some bills have a sunset provision. Basically, the law expires after a set

number of years. CNA, and many other stakeholders, will begin work around the end of the 2025 legislative session to help prepare a report due in 2026. This is in preparation for a new Nurse Practice Act prior to the September 2027 expiration of the current NPA. If you have not heard from CNA already, we will soon be reaching out to nurses in education, advanced practice, hospital, ambulatory, and long-term care, and anywhere else nurses work.

With all the talk of legislative action, I would be remiss to not mention another important point of action within CNA - Groups. Back in March I had the pleasure of speaking with a number of student nurses at the Colorado Student Nurses Association Spring conference. In addition to legislative activities, I shared information about our GAPP committee, 100 for 100, Nurses in Action (and the St. Patrick's Day Parade), Nurses Furthering Knowledge (and their monthly education sessions), and our Rural Health, Workplace Advocacy, Nursing Research, and Nursing Education Advisory and Network Teams. We know many of you are just done after a hard week at work, but for those looking for more, CNA has ways to get involved. Just like the health policy work mentioned above, we look for nurses to take part in our groups for the betterment of nursing and greater satisfaction for the nurse. The Power of Nurses. ■

