

Advocacy in Nursing: A Unified Voice for Change

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Advocacy Day was a powerful reminder of the influence nurses can have when we speak with one voice. We advocated not only for our profession but for the health and safety of every Michigander. Planning for the 2026 Advocacy Day is already underway, and we encourage even more nurses to join us in making a lasting impact.

Advocacy is a fundamental responsibility of every nurse. Whether it's for our patients, our profession, or broader healthcare issues, nurses play a vital role in shaping policy and protecting public health, especially now, as changes in healthcare coverage and access continue to evolve.

On September 17, 2025, ANA-MI members, nursing students, and representatives from the Michigan Organization of Nurse Leadership gathered in Lansing for Advocacy Day. The goal: to ensure legislators and their staff understood the impact of proposed bills, particularly those affecting Medicaid, Medicare, pre-natal care, and ANA-MI's legislative priorities.

The day began with training on how to effectively communicate with lawmakers and their staff. Trinity Health System lobbyists reminded us that many legislators lack healthcare backgrounds, making nurses essential voices in these conversations. We are the subject matter experts.

Senator Hertel and Representative VanderWall provided updates from the Senate and House Health Policy Committees. However, with the October 1 budget deadline approaching, legislative focus had shifted almost entirely to budget negotiations, highlighting how fiscal priorities can stall progress on critical healthcare legislation.

We also met with Representatives Price and Bierlein, who are championing legislation to increase penalties for violence against healthcare workers. Their personal connections to healthcare underscored the urgency of protecting nurses from workplace harm, a key factor driving many out of the profession.

Throughout the day, we held over 40 meetings with legislators and staff in small groups, delivering clear, focused messages about the consequences of budget cuts and the importance of supporting healthcare initiatives. Each nurse contributed a unique perspective, ensuring our concerns were well understood.

The experience revealed a wide range of engagement levels among lawmakers. While some were eager to learn, others were less receptive. Interestingly, legislative staff often demonstrated the deepest understanding and commitment to healthcare issues, taking notes and seeking actionable insights. ■

Your voice matters—use it.

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