

ANA-Ohio Policy Influencers Bootcamp: From Concept to Reality

Contributing Author: Jan Lanier, JD, RN Chair ANA-Ohio Public Policy Committee

The question nagged at me as I lay awake one night: How can we provide nurses with the tools they need to be lifelong policy influencers, not occasional advocates or bystanders, but genuine contributors to a wide gamut of policy decisions that affect nurses, their employers, and their patients? As night became morning, an answer began to emerge to make influencing policy doable, affordable, and accessible. Steps must be taken to provide nurses with the tools they need, take advantage of the expertise of seasoned policy nurses in our midst, intentionally develop strategies to maintain engagement, and create a new approach to nurses influencing policy.

With those parameters in mind, the ANA-Ohio Nurse Policy Influencers Bootcamp took shape. The core principles of the bootcamp were framed around something all nurses recognize, the nurse education format that combines textbook learning with clinical experiences that connect the theoretical with real world experiences. In addition, the bootcamp vision was not to be a stand-alone event; rather, a commitment, one that facilitated putting new knowledge to good use, including ways to nurture long-term relationships with policymakers.

The Public Policy Committee (PPC) of ANA-Ohio brought the idea to fruition, combining the perspectives and expertise of its members: both experienced and younger nurses. Because a bootcamp was unprecedented, it required buy-in on many levels and would be rigorous to develop but the Public Policy Committee was up to the task.

The bootcamp didactic component included four synchronous virtual 90-minute weekly presentations developed by members of the PPC Bootcamp team. The presenters have many years of experience teaching public policy to nursing students. One edited the seminal textbook used in many graduate school public policy courses. That expertise provided the founda-

tion for the classroom portion of the bootcamp. We also asked the participants to respond to a pre and post bootcamp survey of their learning deficits (The results were consistent with our theories) and showed the bootcamp provided needed information to improve their deficits. The topics included:

- An overview of the policy-making process: Getting started
- Behind the curtain: How a bill REALLY becomes a law
- Manipulation, money, and misperceptions
- Being an effective policy influencer

Attendance at these four sessions was required by bootcamp participants and they were recorded and made available upon request.

The clinical sessions were the most challenging to operationalize. The bootcamp offered attendees four weekly visits to the statehouse. Planning obstacles included navigating the statehouse agenda, which can feel like a moving target, as well as unpredictability if the dates of the visits would provide the desired learning experiences. Making the unexpected work is an innate skill most nurses use frequently; this bootcamp was no exception.

Participants were required to attend at least one in-person statehouse session but could attend all four if they chose to do so at no additional cost. Since this was a structured learning experience with opportunities to interact with experienced PPC member “guides,” the Committee was able to offer contact hours for these sessions also. Participants who took advantage of the full bootcamp experience earned 23.5 of the 24 contact hours required for licensure renewal in Ohio. Participants had to sign up for one (or more) of the visits, and each received information about the committees they could attend, the bills on the agenda, a toolkit, and other particulars about what to expect through-

out the day.

Visits included attendance at multiple committee hearings, House and Senate sessions (with special recognition in both chambers), informal conversations with legislators, office meetings with lawmakers, and frequent impromptu interactions with Senators, Representatives, and lobbyists. To achieve the bootcamp goal of increased visibility of nurses at the statehouse, all participants wore red stoles with the bootcamp logo affixed. The stoles were tastefully noticeable and after seeing them on multiple occasions, several legislators commented on them, even on the Senate floor.

Following bootcamp completion, a final virtual session celebrated

meaningful reality required attention to detail and flexibility throughout. Tailored videos and occasional newsletters highlighting boot campers' experiences kept participants connected even when they were not at the statehouse. The willingness to answer questions, take chances and pivot contributed to the success of the event.

There will be a Bootcamp held in 2026, early in the year before legislators turn their attention

to elections and campaigns. Most of the essential components of the inaugural bootcamp will be repeated. Watch for information on the ANA-Ohio website and register early, so you don't miss out on this amazing opportunity!

In their own words, boot campers feedback:

- "Had a great experience at the statehouse. I approached my legislator after the committee meeting I attended. After introducing myself, he invited me to sit down and talk.

Great ice breaker"

- "Thanks for the time and effort to create and present. It was well worth the time it took to participate, and I am feeling more confident in how to move my own organization forward with advocacy."
- "I gained an overall understanding of how to identify policy issues and network with influencers. The overall process was enlightening and informative." ■

Smarter Every Shift: Developing a Nursing Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy That Clicks

Contributing Author: Nelita Iuppa, DNP, MS, BSN, RN, NI-BC, NEA-BC, FHIMSS

Since the emergence of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, healthcare has faced a critical question: *How can we harness the potential of this transformative technology to address the most pressing clinical challenges while navigating the risks associated with its rapid evolution?* Setting a clear AI strategy for nursing is more than a technology initiative; it is a clinical and operational imperative. Nurses are shaping the future of intelligent healthcare while addressing frontline challenges at the point of care. To achieve successful AI integration into clinical practice, all nurses must engage in this global transformation at every level.

AI is already shaping nursing practice, and this influence will only continue to grow (Reading-Turchioe, et al., 2024). Nurses must be educated and engaged in AI planning, training, and implementation. Establishing AI literacy to facilitate nursing care models in an AI-enriched environment is critical for the profession's future (Reading-Turchioe, et al., 2024). To achieve this aim, nurses must stay ahead of the latest scientific developments and continually explore how this technology can be applied to clinical practice. Designing a comprehensive nursing strategy around the use and application of AI requires a structured and thoughtful approach. The following

seven steps, illustrated in Figure 1, provide a summarized method using technical taglines to aid nurses in embracing successful AI strategies in practice.

AI Knowledge and Understanding

Nurses should begin by building a foundational understanding of AI concepts, domains, and practical application knowledge related to nursing care models, clinical decision-making, and value-based outcomes. Molly McCarthy, a global health technology nurse leader, described this new skill set as nurses needing "to learn how to integrate AI results into evidence-based practice while balancing that information with wisdom gained through nursing experience" (Robert, 2019, p. 37). To acquire foundational knowledge, basic literacy regarding terminology, and a general awareness of how these systems are trained and applied to nursing practice models is key. Equally important is an awareness of the legal and ethical implications of AI in healthcare. Applying this understanding to real-world nursing scenarios empowers nurses to make connections that inform AI models for meaningful application to practice, decision-making, and outcomes.

Craft a Culture That Embraces AI

Major transformation requires going be-