

Legislative Awareness and Advocacy Committee

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On January 8, 2026, I began my role as Chair of the Legislative Awareness and Advocacy Committee (LAAC). Bred out of recent legislative events, such as the Tour of the New Jersey State House and ANA (American Nurses Association) Hill Day, was a group of NJSNA nurses poised and eager to advocate for issues impacting nursing and the communities we serve. As this year has been the start of a new legislative session, bills from 2025 have had to be reintroduced and supported. Upon receiving the results of the most recent elections, the group was dismayed to learn that Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz, a nurse and advocate, would no longer be serving during this legislative session.

Still, the stage for nursing advocacy had been set, and the members of the

Legislative Awareness and Advocacy Committee were ready and empowered to engage in political advocacy and tackle issues that nurses are passionate about at the local and state levels. Issues that remain at the forefront for the New Jersey State Nurses Association (NJSNA) include safe staffing for patients (S3022/A1974), funding for professional nursing degrees through the Workforce bill (S2981), and the 'Nurse' title bill (A2474), among others. Nonetheless, collectively celebrated the success of New Jersey Bills S2296 and A4052, which allow advanced practice nurses to have full practice authority, an important move in bridging the healthcare accessibility gap that various patient populations experience.

Through LAAC, this year's goals include providing members with the op-

portunity to get their feet wet in political advocacy. As mentioned before, legislative tours were one opportunity for political engagement. This committee has also participated in letter-writing, speaking with legislators, and creating At-A-Glance flyers that provide legislators with information on bills supported by the NJSNA. In the upcoming year, the LAAC plans to continue in its efforts to provide members a deeper dive into the legislative process, with plans have speakers discuss the process and the nurses role, learning how to interview legislators, and attending senate and assembly hearings so information can be disseminated on how NJSNA members can best support bills or speak up for bills that may negatively impact our patients and nursing as a profession. ■

Supporting Nurses Beyond the Bedside: PNANJ Launches Nurse Emeritus Committee

By Roseminda Santee, DNP, MA, RN, NEA-BC, CNE, ANEF

Retired nurses bring decades of experience, leadership, and mentorship to colleagues entering the profession. Research highlights both the value of continued engagement for retired nurses and the challenges an aging workforce presents to the health care industry. These findings underscore the importance of supporting nurses as they transition into retirement. The Philippine Nurses Association of New Jersey (PNANJ) has long fostered intergenerational connection through its Committee of Emerging Leaders, which pairs developing nurses with established nursing leaders. As PNANJ approaches the 50th anniversary of its incorporation, the organization is also turning its attention to the nurses who built its foundation and are now entering retirement.

Spearheaded by Edith Bien, MA, RN, CIC, the



ninth president of PNANJ, the Retired Nurses Ad Hoc Committee was established to provide retired nurses with a strong social and professional network. The initiative recognizes retirement not as an end to professional identity, but as a new stage that offers opportunities for continued engagement, personal growth, service, and connection.

The committee held its inaugural meeting on September 13, 2025, with 23 PNANJ members in attendance. Teresita Peralta, MA, BSN, RN, presided, and Marites Welch, MAEd, BSN, RN, CCRN-K, served as secretary. On May 2, 2026, the PNANJ Executive Board approved the group's transition from an ad hoc body to the PNANJ Nurse Emeritus Committee, a standing committee of the organization.

Mission and Functions

The committee's mission is to promote continued engagement and personal

growth in retirement while fostering community and mutual support among retired nurses. Its functions include:

- Create a supportive forum for sharing experiences, discussing common challenges, and offering mutual encouragement.
- Organize hobbies and activities that support physical and mental well-being.
- Connect retired nurses with younger nurses for mentorship, advocacy, and knowledge sharing.
- Encourage community service that strengthens purpose and belonging.
- Share opportunities, events, and resources through social media, email, and newsletters.

Membership and Structure

Membership is open to active PNANJ members who have retired from full-time employment and are eligible for retirement benefits and Medicare. The

committee organizes its work across five areas: programs, health and wellness, advocacy, membership, and finance.

Through this initiative, PNANJ honors the contributions of retired nurses while creating meaningful ways for them to remain connected to one another, the profession, and the communities they have served. The committee conveys a simple but powerful message: Retirement may change how nurses serve, but it does not diminish the value of their knowledge, support, leadership, or commitment. ■

References

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