

Title:

Political Advocacy: A Professional Responsibility for Nurses

Judith Ann Young, DNP

Community and Health Systems, Indiana University School of Nursing, Indianapolis, IN, USA

Session Title:

Professionalism in Nursing

Slot:

J 19: Tuesday, 31 October 2017: 8:00 AM-8:45 AM

Scheduled Time:

8:20 AM

Keywords:

Nurse Role, Patient Safety and Political Advocacy

References:

D'Antonio, P., Connolly, C., Wall, B., Whelan, J. & Fairman, J. (2010). Histories of Nursing: The Power and the Possibilities. *Nurs Outlook*, 58(4): 207-13 doi: 10.1016/j.outlook.2010.04.005.

Hahn, J. (2010). Integrating Professionalism and Political Awareness into the Curriculum. *Nurse Educ.* 2010 May-Jun;35(3):110-3. doi: 10.1097/NNE.0b013e3181d95040

Taylor, M. (2016) Impact of Advocacy Initiatives on Nurses' Motivation to Sustain momentum in Public Policy Advocacy, *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 32(3), 235-45. doi: 10.1016/j.profnurs.2015.10.010.

Primomo J & Björling E. (2013). Changes in Political Astuteness following Nurse Legislative Day. *Policy Polit Nurs Pract.* 2013 May;14(2):97-108. doi: 10.1177/1527154413485901.

McMurray A. (2010). Empowerment and Enterprise: The Political Economy of Nursing. *Collegian.* 2010;17(3):113-8.

Abstract Summary:

Patient advocacy is a professional responsibility. Nursing's unique perspective provides an informed voice to legislators. Due to reluctance to assume an advocacy role nursing's political influence has diminished. A state Senator was invited to raise nurse awareness of the importance for patient advocacy in the legislative arena.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
Articulate the importance to professional practice that nurses assume the advocacy role at point of care and in the legislative arena. .	What is known through the literature review related to nurse advocacy and relevance to professional practice will be outlined.
Describe the processes involved with inviting a state legislator to a healthcare organization.	Activities related to planning and organizing the event will be presented. An overview of the visit agenda will also be outlined.
Outline an educational strategy for nursing students to facilitate competency as a political advocate.	The components of the educational strategy will be presented, and student feedback provided.

Abstract Text:

Patient advocacy refers to nursing action guided by professional standards, and the code of ethics (Taylor, 2016). This action is considered a required component of professional practice due to patient vulnerability inherent with illness, unfamiliarity with health related information, and the complexity of the healthcare system (Hahn, 2010). Nurses are strategically positioned at point of care for the advocacy role due to the relationship established when patient wishes are determined (Hanks, 2008) and the professional responsibility to support patient autonomy and self-determination with health care decisions. The professional nursing code of ethics also requires political activism to uphold public safety through the evaluation of the impact of health policy upon patient care (Hahn, 2010; Taylor, 2016).

Overall, the influence of nursing upon health policy has been minimal (Short, 2007). Historical examples of nursing advocacy include the actions of Florence Nightingale, Margaret Sanger, and Dorothea Dix. Nightingale utilized the media to inform the public of the conditions endured by soldiers injured in the Crimea war, to gain the resources she needed. Margaret Sanger advocated for women's rights and birth control at a time when such discussions were not protected by legislation, eventually leading to the founding of Planned Parenthood. Dorothea Dix advocated for the mentally ill which resulted in legislation protecting this vulnerable group (D'Antonio, et al., 2010; Zauderer, et al., 2009). Current examples include research that resulted in policy development relating to nurse staffing (Aiken, et al., 2002).

Despite the professional requirement, and legislative decisions that impact nursing education, practice and research, nurses have generally remained reluctant to assume an advocacy role and refrain from speaking out for social, health related legislation diminishing nursing image and political influence (Taylor, 2016). Nurses consider political activism not related to their role and outside scope of nursing practice and competence (Taylor). Nurses must be empowered to engage in decision making relating to healthcare concerns and contact representatives sharing support or concerns (Mc Murray, 2010). Nursing's unique perspective provides an informed nursing voice to act as the patient advocate to influence decision making in the political arena (Primomo & Bjorling, 2013). The importance for political advocacy can be strengthened through experiential learning. Educational strategies applied to bedside clinicians and student students will be presented.