The Advocate:
North Carolina AWHONN Legislative Update

State of NC Long session in Raleigh ended middle of October.

1. **House Bill 372 – Medicaid reform**
   - Passed in Sept 2015. Waiting on CMS approval now. Big win for nursing. They removed the verbiage of Physician lead entity and changed it to Provider lead entity. NP can be owners of a provider lead entity.
   - Moving away from fee for service to a capitated fee. Meaning the provider will get a predetermined amount of money for a patient for the year. Provider will need to figure out how to give them quality care throughout the year with predetermined amount.

2. **House Bill 13 – Health assessment**
   - Previously, North Carolina required health assessments for kids entering kindergarten, but those entering the public school system at any other grade were exempt.
   - Parents sending their kids to North Carolina public schools for the first time this August will face slightly different health assessment and vaccine regulations.

3. **House Bill 560 - Assault Emergency Workers/Hospital Personnel**
   - Bill passed making it a Class I felony if a person commits an assault or affray causing physical injury on a firefighter, an emergency medical technician, medical responder, and hospital personnel.

4. **Senate bill 695 – Modernize Nursing Practice Act**
   - Didn’t pass during the long session but remains on the table for next year’s short session.
   - This bill will impact all levels of nursing, but includes a particularly important update to the ways Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN’s) are regulated. If signed into law, APRN’s would no longer be subject to costly and unnecessary physician supervision requirements. It is an improvement that has been touted by healthcare experts across the country for a long time, with many states already moving to make these changes. Simply put, North Carolina is behind the times.
   - Speak to, email or write a letter to your local officials to express your support for this bill.
5. **H.R. 2083 (S. 1132) Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act of 2015**

**Purpose**
- Establish safe nursing staffing levels at Medicare participating hospitals
- Require each hospital address each unit’s unique characteristics
- Require each hospital to establish a nursing staffing committee to implement this plan (comprised of 55% actual staff nurses)

**Benefits to Patients**
- Lower patient mortality
- Decrease patient injury from falls and medication errors
- Allow for identification of progressing illnesses and complications
- Prevent adverse events
- Improve patient satisfaction
- Decrease length of stay

**Benefits to Nurses**
- Decrease job dissatisfaction
- Decrease fatigue and burnout
- Keep nurses from leaving the bedside for other careers
- Increase patient satisfaction scores related to reimbursement
- Decrease readmission rates
- Decrease medication errors and falls

**Support**
"The American Nurses Association (ANA) urges your support for H.R. 2083/S.1132, the Registered Nurse Safe Staffing Act. This legislation presents a balanced approach that promotes the development and implementation of valid, reliable, unit-by-unit nurse staffing plans to ensure patient safety”. (ANA, 2015)

6. **Protecting our Infants Act of 2015**
- Sept 8, 2015, the US House of Representatives passed this act. It is expected to be considered by the full Senate soon, but it’s our understanding that Senate Democrats need an extra nudge. If your Senator(s) is a Democrat and NOT already a co-sponsor of the bill, please reach out to them today!
If your Senators are NOT listed here, consider sending them an email, asking that they support this bill. AWHONN’s Legislative Action Center has a template letter that you can send to your Senator’s with a few quick clicks.

The Co-Sponsors are listed below:

**S.799 - Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015**

**Sponsor:** Sen. McConnell, Mitch [R-KY] (Introduced 03/19/2015)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosponsor</th>
<th>Date Cosponsored</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sen. Casey, Robert P., Jr. [D-PA]*</td>
<td>03/19/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sen. Baldwin, Tammy [D-WI]</td>
<td>05/04/2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sen. Whitehouse, Sheldon [D-RI]</td>
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<td>Sen. Brown, Sherrod [D-OH]</td>
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<td>Sen. Coons, Christopher A. [D-DE]</td>
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<td>Sen. Gillibrand, Kirsten E. [D-NY]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sen. Donnelly, Joe [D-IN]</td>
<td>07/16/2015</td>
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<td>Sen. Murray, Patty [D-WA]</td>
<td>08/05/2015</td>
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1) **Seeking Volunteers**

- AWHONN’s position statement, “Confidentiality in Adolescent Health Care,” was last updated in 2009. It is due to be reviewed and possibly revised. If you or another member of your Section has expertise in this area and would like to participate in a small task force to review the existing position statement, please email me at kwade@awhonn.org. Thanks in advance for considering it.

2) **AWHONN Partners with the White House**

- This week, AWHONN partnered with the White House and a number of public and private sector entities to announce new efforts to address the prescription drug abuse and heroin epidemic. For more resources and information on substance use disorders in pregnancy, visit AWHONN’s website.

3) **New Advocacy Tool from AWHONN**

- This week, AWHONN launched “Engage,” a new, online advocacy platform. Engage allows you to learn more about the legislation and policies that AWHONN supports and to connect with your Members of Congress. Visit the site to learn about legislation related to breastfeeding, Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), pregnancy discrimination, and more. Keep coming back as we will continue to add new content!

3) **Prescriptive Authority Bill**

- In August, AWHONN formally endorsed The Recovery Enhancement for Addiction Treatment Act, also known as the TREAT Act. This legislation would expand access to buprenorphine by raising the current caps on physician prescriber limits and by allowing certain Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants to become prescribers. Weigh in with your elected officials and write a letter of support for the legislation.
October, 2015

Please let us know if you have any additional questions or ideas!

Thank you from your AWHONN State Legislative Representatives,
Dee Sanfilippo and Kellie Griggs

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