

Health Policy Update – April 2019

The 92nd Arkansas General Assembly is over. This column will recap the bills we outlined in the Winter 2019 *Arkansas Nursing News* and other bills of interest to nursing filed this session and their outcomes.

HB1745: TO AMEND THE LAWS CONCERNING PRESCRIPTION ASTHMA INHALERS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS; AND TO AUTHORIZE ACQUIRING AND STOCKING ALBUTEROL FOR ADMINISTRATION IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS was signed into law as Act 851. This act will permit schools to stock albuterol to be administered by school nurses and other trained personnel. Representative Lee Johnson, an emergency room physician from Greenwood, Arkansas, sponsored this bill and several others aimed at improving healthcare for children. Representative Julie Mayberry of Hensley, and Senators Missy Irvin of Mountain View and Eddie Cheatham of Crossett co-sponsored this bill. **HB 1801, now Act 856**, sponsored by Representative Johnson and co-sponsored by Senator Missy Irvin, requires the Arkansas Medicaid program to pay for an additional albuterol inhaler in August for children under the age of 18 years. This will also help improve access to emergent treatment for children with asthma. **HB 1167, now Act 247**, sponsored by Representative Johnson and co-sponsored by Representative Justin Boyd of Fort Smith and Senator David Wallace of Leachville, allows students to possess and use topical sunscreen without the written permission of parent, guardian, or healthcare provider, and allows school personnel to assist a student to apply sunscreen with the written permission of a parent or guardian. Because the U.S. Food and Drug Administration categorizes sunscreen as an over-the-counter drug, students could not possess or use it without written permission.

HB 1282/SB 189: TO REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR A MANDATORY COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AGREEMENT FOR AN ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE TO HAVE PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY was sponsored by Representative Robin Lundstrum of Elm Springs, and Senator David Wallace. Co-sponsors included Senator Bob Ballinger of Berryville, Representatives Ken Bragg of Sheridan, Roger Lynch of Lonoke, Brant Smith of Jonesboro, Cameron Cooper of Romance, Reginal Murdock of Marianna, Rick Beck of Center Ridge, Bruce Coleman of Mountainburg, Justin Gonzalez of Okolona, John Payton of Wilburn, Mary Bentley of Perryville, Dan Douglas of Bentonville, Joe Jett of Success, and Dan Sullivan of Jonesboro. The bill was one vote short of passing out of both Senate and House Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committees. Special thanks to Rep. Lundstrum and Senator Wallace. They were great sponsors and have pledged to work with us again on this bill.

HB 1267: TO AMEND THE PRESCRIPTIVE AUTHORITY OF AN ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE was signed into law as Act 593. This act allows advanced practice registered nurses with prescriptive authority to prescribe up to 5 days' supply of Schedule II opioids, and to refill Schedule II stimulants if a physician initiated the medication and a physician has evaluated the patient within 6 months. Representative Justin Gonzales sponsored this bill and Senator Kim Hammer of Benton co-sponsored.

HB 1284: TO AUTHORIZE THE ARKANSAS MEDICAID PROGRAM TO RECOGNIZE AN ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSE AS A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER, sponsored by Representative Justin Gonzalez, was not heard in committee this session, yet the Regulatory issue will be up for discussion during the coming months while the legislators convene jointly.

HB 1552: TO AMEND THE LAWS CONCERNING NURSING LICENSURES was signed into law as Act 837. This legislation, sponsored by Representative Megan Godfrey with numerous co-sponsors, allows the Arkansas State Board of Nursing to grant a license to eligible applicants that have an exemption under

the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy. Previously, applicants identified as having DACA exemption were not eligible to obtain a professional nursing license in Arkansas due to federal legislation.

SB 184: TO AMEND THE DEFINITION OF CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS BY REMOVING SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS sponsored by Senator Gary Stubblefield of Branch and Representative Justin Gonzales, co-sponsored by Senator Bill Sample of Hot Springs, passed through both Senate and House Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committees, and the senate, but failed to pass out of the full House floor by two votes. TWO VOTES! CRNAs had a great session, this issue will be back in two years!

Bills that ARNA opposed again this session were not heard, or failed to pass out of committee. These include those establishing new licenses for community health workers and anesthesia assistants, and placing advanced practice registered nurse licenses under the medical board. HB 1568: TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS ADVISORY COUNCIL OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH failed to pass on the House floor with a vote of 41 to 33. Nurses voices were heard on voterVOICE, social media and within the Capitol halls.