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Public policy decisions directly affect nurses and their patients. Participating in the legislative process is one of the most, if not the most, significant ways in which nurses can affect public policy. If nurses do not participate, important public policy decisions affecting nurses, nursing practice, and patients are made without nursing input. Nurses are more likely to be effective and successful in participating in the legislative process by following certain principles which include understanding how the legislative process works, understanding the role of negotiation and compromise, and having an effective decision-making process.	
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The most significant action that nurses can take to manage the changing health care environment is to advocate for patients, for the profession of nursing, and for each other. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report <i>To Err is Human</i> started a groundswell of concern for patient safety. The IOM then released their report <i>Keeping Patients Safe: Transforming the Work Environment of Nurses</i> , acknowledging that nurses have a major impact on patient safety. This article argues for a culture of safety in the nursing workplace.	
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Advocacy can be defined as “the act of pleading or supporting”; to advocate is to “plead in favor of.” Nurse advocacy may be thought of as “speaking out and speaking for patients.” But how does advocacy occur in nursing practice? How does an individual nurse provide a voice on behalf of patients that is heard? This article reviews the concept of patient advocacy and the role of nurses. Challenges to advocacy activities are presented and strategies for effective advocacy practice are discussed.	
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There are 6 levels through which an individual nurse can advocate for patients, health care, and the nursing profession. By cultivating relationships, expressing positions clearly and precisely, and being dependable	

and involved in the decision-making environment, a nurse can be an influential advocate. This article discusses the levels of advocacy and describes the steps and behaviors that lead to a position of influence.

Communicating with Your Legislator

393

Joanne D. Oliver

Nurses must actively participate in influencing the future of health care and the nursing profession. Involvement in the legislative process is an effective way to influence access to health care, health care costs, and the role of nursing in the health care environment. Read and research the legislation being presented; formulate a personal plan for your own involvement. Know your legislators and communicate with them consistently. As informed, committed, and enthusiastic supporters of legislation that furthers our objectives, 3.1 million registered nurses can educate and influence legislators and promote the future in which we believe.

SECTION II: Advocating for Nurses and Patients

Creating and Maintaining a Just Culture of Safety and Advocacy in Perioperative Services

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Mike Thomas

A culture of safety and advocacy is the most effective environment in which to address workplace challenges successfully and deliver outstanding, safe patient care. A safe or just culture encourages employees to be vigilant, to identify and examine close calls to prevent errors. Such a culture emphasizes patient safety, retains employees, curbs spiraling healthcare costs, and meets regulatory and patient expectations of care.

Triangular Approach to Nursing Evidence-Based Practice Toward Improvement: A Starter Kit to Assess Research Strength and Enhance Patient Outcomes

401

Patti S. Grant

This article proposes a nursing evidence-based practice (EBP) starter kit for smaller health care facilities, with a novel triangular approach to nursing EBP to consider strength of evidence, time management, and a culture of safety. Internet-based references are suggested for this novel EBP triangular approach. Safety dialogue and references for nurse empowerment toward furthering safety culture are suggested. The application of Stephen R. Covey's "7 Habits" Circle of Influence and Time Management Matrix toward implementation of nursing EBP is proposed.

Advocating for Perioperative Learning Through Learning Practice Communities

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Andrea E. Berndt, Evelyn Swenson-Britt, and Rosemary K. Rushmer

This article considers barriers to nurses' collective learning in perioperative units and suggests the development of learning practice communities as a potential solution. Several characteristics of learning practice communities

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