

The Honorable Arlene Wohlgemuth and the Texas Public Policy Foundation

Texas Treasures for Nurses

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KEYWORDS

- Advanced practice nurse • Affordable care act • Medicaid • ObamaCare • PPACA
- Policy • Wohlgemuth • Texas health policy

KEY POINTS

- Block Grants and Healthcare Compacts are potential solutions to the Medicaid economic crisis facing many states.
- Access to healthcare in Texas is significantly affected by limitations placed Advanced Practice Nurses in the State.
- The Texas Public Policy Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization, which provides credible information that nurses can use to influence health care policy.
- The Director of the Center for Health Care Policy at the Foundation, Ms Wohlgemuth, discusses the resources available.

Earlier this spring, this author had the honor of talking with the Honorable Arlene Wohlgemuth to learn more about the Texas Public Policy Foundation, the Center for Health Care Policy, and to discuss issues facing Texas, the nation, and Advanced Practice Nurses. The following article summarizes the conversation and information learned during the meeting.

Ms Wohlgemuth is the Executive Director and Director of the Center for Health Care Policy at the Texas Public Policy Foundation (the Foundation), a nonprofit, nonpartisan, free-market research institute based in Austin, Texas. She served the as a legislator for 10 years in the Texas House of Representatives specializing in health care issues, and has a well-documented track record in support of nursing, specifically expanding the scope of practice for advance practice nurses (APNs) in the State of Texas.

Disclosure of relationships: No relationships to disclose.

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ABOUT THE TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION

Founded in 1989 by James Leininger, of San Antonio, the Foundation is a \$5 million research institute with a strong focus on conservative, free-market values. As a 501(c)(3) designated organization, the Foundation cannot be directly involved with, or participate in campaign or legislative activities.¹ The Foundation has 30 employees and 9 policy centers,² each with a specific mission and areas of focus (Table 1).

The overall mission of the Foundation is “to promote and defend liberty, personal responsibility, and free enterprise in Texas and the nation by educating and affecting policymakers and the Texas public policy debate with academically sound research and outreach.”^{2(p6)}

Ms Wohlgemuth was asked what sets the Foundation apart from other research institutes. She stated that whereas many think tanks and research institutes charge a fee for their services, the Foundation refuses to accept funded research. Their research is completely independent of financial or political influence (Arlene Wohlgemuth, personal communication, 2012). The work of the Foundation is used by local government, lawmakers, lobbyists, groups, and organizations in Texas (and other states) to inform policy makers on issues of economics, private rights, education, and health care.

ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSES IN TEXAS

Ms Wohlgemuth has been a staunch supporter of nursing and advanced nursing practice for many years. Policy analysts at the Foundation are convinced that Advanced

Table 1 Texas Public Policy Foundation centers and missions	
Center	Mission
Armstrong Center for Energy and the Environment	"...Champions market-based stewardship of natural resources and provides principled solutions to environmental problems" (p. 10)
Center for Economic Freedom	"...Works to free citizens from interference in their private property rights and promotes a regulatory regime that enforces an honest, open marketplace" (p. 13)
Center for Education Policy	"...Provides market-based solutions to improve public education in Texas through school choice, competition, and greater spending transparency" (p. 12)
Center for Effective Justice	"...Works to reduce the negative human and economic impact of crime on victims and communities" (p. 14)
Center for Fiscal Policy	"...Advances prosperity through good stewardship of taxpayer dollars and promotes the principles of responsible taxation" (p. 7)
Center for Health Care Policy	"...Promotes a competitive private health care market with choice for consumers, lower prices, and improved quality" (p. 8)
Center for Higher Education	"...Champions a system of higher education with greater affordability, accessibility, quality, and transparency" (p. 9)
Laffer Center for Supply Side Economics	"...Cultivates the next generation of supply-side thinkers ... able to articulate complex economic ideas in easily understandable terms" (p. 15)
Center for Tenth Amendment Studies	"...Works to restore the Constitutional balance between the states and the federal government" (p. 11)

Data from Texas Public Policy Foundation Annual Report. 2012.

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