

# Impacting Legislation and Policy: Nurses as Change Agents

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- Nursing continues to be rated the most trusted profession, according to the annual [Gallup poll ranking](#) of honesty and ethics in various fields.
- For the past 14 years, the public has voted nurses as the most honest and ethical profession in America. This year, 85 percent of Americans rated nurses' honesty and ethical standards as “very high” or “high,” tying a nurses' high point on the Gallup poll and 17 percentage points above any other profession.

Source: <http://nursingworld.org/FunctionalMenuCategories/MediaResources/PressReleases/2015-NR/Nurses-Rank-as-Most-Honest-Ethical-Profession-for-14th-Straight-Year.html>

# Campaign for Action

**Goal:** ensure placement of 10,000 nurses on boards and other influential bodies by the year 2020

- The Nurses on Boards Coalition (NPBC), which includes AARP, Robert wood Johnson Foundation and 19 nursing organizations is a direct response to IOM's recommendations-NURSES should play a more visible and pivotal role as decision makers on boards and commissions.

<http://campaignforaction.org/issue/promoting-nursing-leadership/>



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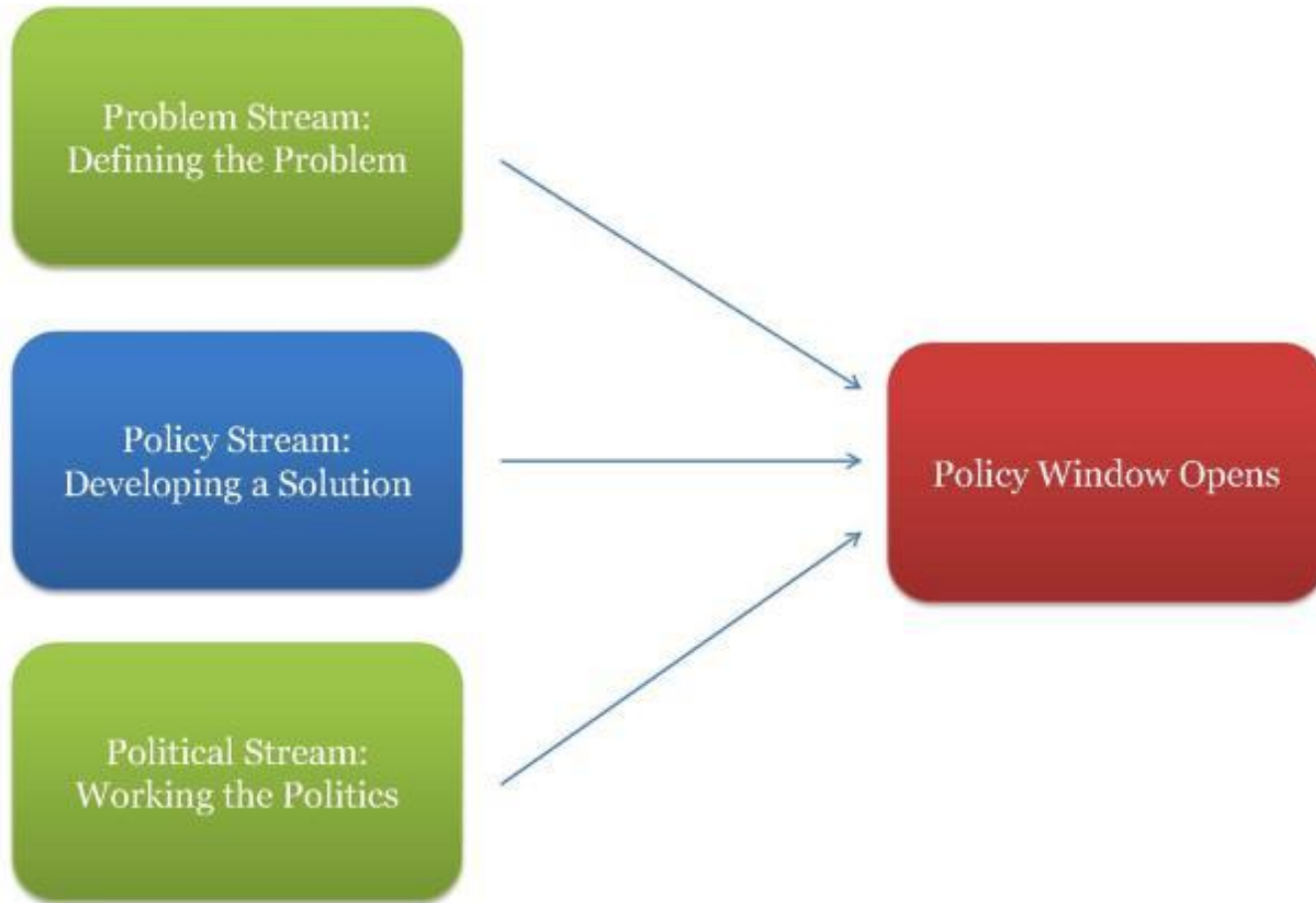
**The Future of Nursing Leading  
Change, Advancing Health**

# Policy Surrounds Nursing and Health Care Practices

While long considered to be *someone else's job*...

- Nurses cannot detach their practice from the multiple aspects of health policy that govern it. Health policy determines who gets care, where, when, from whom, and at what cost (O'Grady, Mason, Hopkins Outlaw, & Gardner, 2016).

# How and when do policies change?



Kingdon, 2011



# Activism



# “All politics is local”

- Local town/city government
  - School committee
  - Mayor
  - Selectman
  - Town meeting
- State senators/House members
- Committees and Boards



# How hard is it to make a bill a law?

- On average, it takes 8 years to pass a bill
- Over 6,000 bills were introduced in legislative session on average past 3 sessions, with 200 passing on average/session
- **IT TAKES NOISE! EDUCATION! ACTIVISM!**

# How nurses can influence a bill becoming a law

- House & Senate Leadership
- Governor and Agencies
- Support and Opposition both inside and outside of “the building”
- Professional Lobbying
- Grass Roots Activism
- Role of PAC
- RELATIONSHIPS!!!

# What is a Political Action Committee (PAC)?

- An organization whose purpose is to raise and distribute campaign funds to candidates seeking political office
- Formed by corporations, labor unions, trade associations, or other organizations or individuals
- Channel voluntary member contributions they raise to candidates in elected offices

# PACs may be formed for many reasons



# Benefits of Forming a PAC

- Organization can define the mission of the PAC
- PACs are long lasting, unlike campaigns which are short lived, can build an organization and donor structure
- Many people can be involved
- PACs allow you to think BIG!
- PACs GIVE YOU A PLACE AT THE TABLE!

# Functions of the MCNP-PAC

- Create guidelines for donating to candidates with varying levels of endorsement
- Identify and build relationships with key stakeholders that influence health policy, in concert with the MCNP board and lobbying team
- Contribute financial and human capital to political campaigns





# Functions of the MCNP-PAC

- Develop fundraising ideas and raise money to ensure adequate resources to sustain financial viability
- Attend political fundraisers and elevate the MCNPs policy political agenda to a new level by increasing access to legislators and policy makers
- Serve as the voice of the MCNP, educating policy makers about NP practice and issues that affect their constituents

“Why should I donate to a PAC? I already paid my professional membership fees....”

- State and federal laws prohibit the use of member dues for the purpose of contributing to political campaigns
- Our strength as a PAC is dependent upon the generosity of our members, which allows us to contribute to political campaigns
- Its your chance to show your commitment to your profession and be a change agent, and most importantly...

## MONEY TALKS!

# Politics is not a spectator sport

***Stand up for Your Practice!*** Be a part of the discussion! The ability to serve your patients, and create exceptional experiences that patients need is tied to your license.

***Stand up for Your Practice!*** If you do not help support and promote our bill, legislators will find other bills that are worthy of their time, attention and energy.

***Stand up for Your Practice!*** Meet your local State Representatives and State Senators and educate them about your profession and what you do for your patients.

***Stand up for Your Practice!*** Bring other APN colleagues as well as family and friends who are committed to supporting our cause.



# Becoming political aware and knowing what to expect


- Know the timing and logistics of important policy discussions
- Prepare research findings to succinctly present to policy makers
- Identify stakeholders who can use your research in their advocacy efforts

# Participate


- Hospital based legislative action groups-often multidisciplinary and collaborative-if one does not exist, start it!
- Be aware of legislative agendas
- Know your local politics
- Support professional organizations-dues and PAC support
- Pay attention to barriers “at the bedside”
- Answer the call for help

# Take advantage:

Looking for a way to influence healthcare legislation but not sure where to start?



**NIWI 2016**  
March 6-8, 2016  
The Westin Crystal City  
Arlington, Virginia



[www.nursing-alliance.org](http://www.nursing-alliance.org) or call 859-514-9157



# Be the change you wish to be

*“Were there none who were discontented with what they have, the world would never reach anything better”*

Florence Nightingale  
Notes on Nursing