

## **Resolution 2021-1**

### **Protecting Healthcare Workers from Infectious Disease Outbreaks**

WHEREAS, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, SARS, MERS, H1N1 influenza, Zika, and Ebola over the last two decades has reinforced the need to prioritize emergency preparedness for infectious disease outbreaks; and

WHEREAS, until recently, there has been a failure to address the lack of domestic production of personal protective equipment, particularly N95 respirators, ensuring the global supply chain problems we continue to face; and

WHEREAS, state and local public health departments have historically been severely underfunded and are highly reliant on the CDC for support and direction; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of healthcare workers are known to have been infected and at least 3,600 died in the United States within the first 12 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of these unnecessary deaths involved concerns over inadequate personal protective equipment:

BE IT RESOLVED, that AaNA will advocate for strong investment in public health on the federal and state levels to develop a rigorous system that supports prevention of illness as a public good; and

RESOLVED, that AaNA supports a presumption of compensability and eligibility for workers' compensation benefits in the case of healthcare workers who contract COVID-19; and

RESOLVED, that AaNA will support increased funding for OSHA enforcement and whistleblower protection, and increased funding for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health for research on respiratory protection, PPE and engineering controls like ventilated headboards; and

RESOLVED, that because no healthcare worker should have to experience the gross failure to uphold their right to a safe and healthy workplace, and one healthcare worker death from COVID-19 is too many, AaNA will work through collective bargaining and legislative advocacy to ensure healthcare employers are prepared to protect healthcare workers from occupational exposure to COVID-19 and any other infectious disease outbreak; and

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Nurses Association will continue to pursue any and all avenues to work with various local, state, and national agencies to ensure the health and safety of frontline nurses and their families.

## **Resolution 2021-2**

### **2022 Advocacy Priorities**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following are advocacy priorities for the Alaska Nurses Association in 2022:

- Maintaining the collective bargaining rights of Alaska's workers and safeguarding worker protections including those related to workplace safety, worker privacy, and labor rights; and
- Opposing Alaska's participation in the Nurse Licensure Compact and working to maintain a strong and independent Alaska Board of Nursing; and
- Ensuring nurses have the resources they need during the COVID-19 pandemic, including safe workplaces, access to appropriate high-quality PPE, mental health support, and economic security; and
- Campaigning to end workplace violence in healthcare settings; and
- Advocating for Alaska's healthcare employers to reduce their reliance on travel nurses, and to invest in retention of their nursing workforces by offering incentive rates, overtime opportunities, and bonuses to permanent nursing staff; and
- Supporting strong, fully-funded state health programs, which include Medicaid services, public health services, preventative dental care, behavioral health and mental health care, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and assisted living facilities for Alaska's elders; and
- Ensuring every Alaskan student has daily access to a professionally-prepared school nurse, during both in-person and virtual education; and
- Protecting Alaskans from harmful chemicals and educating nurses on the impacts of climate change and other environmental health issues affecting Alaskans; and
- Standing up for improved staffing and safe workplaces for all Alaskan nurses and healthcare workers; and
- Supporting proposals for debt-free higher education for nurses and healthcare professionals and advancing policies to alleviate the student loan debt crisis; and
- Addressing the healthcare workforce shortage and increasing recruitment and retention of nurses and healthcare professionals; and
- Engaging in active solidarity with Alaska's labor movement, allied organizations, and our communities to resist all attacks on working people and to build union power across our state; and
- Ensuring all Alaskans receive fair and equitable treatment in healthcare and in our communities, celebrating diversity and inclusion, and reducing racial, economic, health, and gender disparities.

## **Resolution 2021-3**

### **Increasing Health Literacy with regard to Vaccination Reception**

WHEREAS, low health literacy is a serious issue in the United States, accounting for numerous adverse effects on health, such as increased hospitalizations, decreased screenings, and lesser receipt of vaccinations; and

WHEREAS, according to the most recent assessment of adult health literacy levels, only 12% of adults within the United States were shown to have proficient health literacy; and

WHEREAS, vaccinations have been shown to result in a lower rate of disease, death, and disability among numerous populations from various infectious diseases such as diphtheria, smallpox, tetanus, and COVID 19; and

WHEREAS, as a result, increasing health literacy levels and education about vaccinations have shown to increase the rate of reception of vaccinations; and

WHEREAS, hesitancy in the reception of vaccinations has started to reverse the progress that implementation of vaccinations has made, such as reversal of many of these diseases, or decreased number of cases:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Nurses Association will advocate for increased utilization of health literacy screening tools in all healthcare and treatment settings and increased education regarding health literacy to increase receptivity to vaccinations; and

RESOLVED, that AaNA advocate for the assessment and implementation of health literacy screening tools with the goal of increasing health literacy levels, particularly with regard to vaccination education, among the patients with whom they interact.

**Resolution 2021-4**  
**2022 Continuing Education Program Priorities**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following are priorities for the Alaska Nurses Association's Continuing Education program for 2022:

- Continuing to seek out creative methods to deliver quality and accessible education that meets the needs of Alaska's nurses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Maintaining continuing education activities for nurses throughout the state of Alaska through in-person education, online webinar opportunities, and The Alaska Nurse magazine; and
- Continuing to joint provide continuing education activities with community partners; and
- Promoting increased opportunities for continuing education in rural Alaska; and
- Ensuring the sustainability and progress of the Alaska Nurses Association's Continuing Education program.

## **Resolution 2021-5**

### **Exploring the Opportunity to Conduct Officer Elections by Remote Ballot**

WHEREAS, the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, establishes certain rights for union members and contains provisions to ensure union democracy and financial integrity, such as setting forth basic democratic procedures which unions must follow in conducting officer elections; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Nurses Association conducts its officer elections for Board of Directors, Labor Council, and bargaining units in accordance with LMRDA statute, Office of Labor Management Standards (OLMS) guidance, and AaNA bylaws and Labor Council policies; and

WHEREAS, OLMS has found that remote electronic voting systems are permissible so long as they satisfy the LMRDA's standards, and has promulgated guidance to explain how the LMRDA's requirements apply when implementing online voting in officer elections; and

WHEREAS, AaNA is governed democratically for and by members, and member participation and involvement is essential to our organization's strength and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, we believe that utilizing a remote electronic voting system to conduct union elections would both increase member voting participation and present a cost-savings opportunity:

BE IT RESOLVED, that AaNA will explore the opportunity to conduct online officer elections in compliance with federal guidance, including researching necessary bylaws and policy amendments, investigating potential online voting platforms, and soliciting member feedback.

## **Resolution 2021-6**

### **Increasing Awareness regarding the Effects of Dehydration in Nurses**

WHEREAS, the Alaska Nurses Association promotes making hydration a priority because not hydrating adequately can affect the nurse's ability to concentrate and can cause headaches, irritability, chronic fatigue, joint pain, a weakened immune response, reduced kidney function, and poor digestion; and

WHEREAS, a 2016 study, assessing dehydration in nurses and doctors on-call, found that 36% of participants were dehydrated at the beginning of their shift and 45% of participants were dehydrated after their shift, and in this same study, dehydration was correlated with increased error, which can impact patient safety; and

WHEREAS, those who usually hydrate adequately report detrimental impacts on their mood state, less positive emotions, decreased alertness, and increased thirst from restricted water intake:

BE IT RESOLVED, that AaNA encourage members to increase their knowledge of the importance of hydration during nursing shifts to avoid impaired cognitive function and prevent detrimental physical effects of dehydration; and

RESOLVED, that AaNA supports self-care by encouraging regular breaks to drink water and use the restroom.

## **Resolution 2021-7**

### **Affirming Opposition to Nurse Licensure Compact Legislation in Alaska**

WHEREAS, AaNA is the recognized leader and voice of nurses in Alaska and works with the Alaska Board of Nursing and Alaska Legislature on issues that affect nurse licensure and practice in our state; and

WHEREAS, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), a private, non-regulatory, non-governmental trade association, has created a Nurse Licensure Compact for multistate nursing practice; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is not a member of the Nurse Licensure Compact, and Alaska currently enjoys complete autonomy over the regulation of the profession of nursing, allowing local experts to make local decisions that are best for our state; and

WHEREAS, joining the Nurse Licensure Compact would erode Alaska's state sovereignty and pose significant new complications for regulating nursing practice in our state; and

WHEREAS, the Nurse Licensure Compact undermines the mission of the Alaska Board of Nursing by hindering the Board's ability to protect the health and safety of the Alaskan public; and

WHEREAS, the Nurse Licensure Compact allows nurses to circumvent Alaska's rigorous and necessary standards regarding nursing education, continued competency, and safe conduct and practice; this ultimately lowers nursing standards and diminishes the quality of patient care that Alaskans receive; and

WHEREAS, any member state discovering that the Nurse Licensure Compact overrules the state at excessive cost, will find it difficult, expensive, and perhaps impossible to extricate itself from the Compact; and

WHEREAS, there are other regulatory solutions to providing for telehealth and allowing expedited licensing processes, and these solutions do not require the State to cede its authority to a private, non-regulatory, non-governmental trade association (NCSBN), nor do these solutions undermine standards for nursing nor jeopardize the health and safety of Alaskan patients; and

WHEREAS, the Nurse Licensure Compact presents barriers to all nurses, including obstacles to advancing practice authority and advocacy through collective bargaining, and by potentially

suppressing wages, undermining worker and safety protections, and deteriorating working conditions through generalized –instead of community– standards:

BE IT RESOLVED, the Alaska Nurses Association affirms our position that licensure for nurses working in Alaska should be under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Board of Nursing; and

RESOLVED, AaNA affirms our unequivocal opposition to Nurse Licensure Compact legislation in the state of Alaska; and

RESOLVED, AaNA will intensify our efforts to educate Alaskan nurses, legislators, and the public on the dangers of joining the Nurse Licensure Compact and will mobilize our members in opposition to Nurse Licensure Compact legislation in Alaska.

## **Resolution 2021-8**

### **Affirming our Commitment to Workplace Violence Prevention**

WHEREAS, workplace violence (WPV) in healthcare settings is a significant occupational hazard that threatens healthcare worker and patient safety and well-being and has caused death and serious injury; and

WHEREAS, workplace violence has been defined by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health as “any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting”; and

WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), healthcare workers suffer injuries associated with workplace violence at almost twice the rate of all other private sector workers; and

WHEREAS, there currently is no consistent surveillance system for tracking the incidence of violence in healthcare settings across state and federal agencies, resulting in inconsistent measures of the extent and nature of the problem from various sources; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that work-related assaults and injuries associated with violence in healthcare facilities are routinely underreported; healthcare workers are often discouraged from reporting assaults or threats of violence, and many healthcare employers and workers accept it as part of the job; and

WHEREAS, workplace violence leads to increased medical and stress-related disability claims, higher turnover, increased overtime usage, interruptions in continuity of care, and lower productivity, as well as greater legal liability for the employer; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) workplace violence standard:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Nurses Association will push for enactment of a federal OSHA standard and other state and federal legislation that would require healthcare employers to establish and maintain comprehensive workplace violence prevention programs that include a written program, record-keeping on work-related violence, risk evaluation and implementation of control measures, training, and union and worker involvement; and

RESOLVED, that AaNA will support legislation that directs OSHA to promulgate a comprehensive workplace violence prevention standard with the following elements:

- Written employer workplace violence prevention programs that also address bullying and harassment specific to the risk factors and characteristics of the individual healthcare setting
- Genuine worker and union involvement in the development of the program; and

- Healthcare facility analysis to identify existing and potential hazards and conditions, including the tracking of violent and non-violent incidents and injury/illness with regular analysis of incidents
- Hazard prevention and control: the identification and implementation of engineering controls
- Record-keeping including methods to ensure that violent incidents are reported without fear of reprisal or discrimination
- Robust, evidence-based training of frontline workers and management in the prevention of workplace violence, including intervention and de-escalation techniques and physical disengagement skills
- Evaluation of efforts to prevent workplace violence incidents; and

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Nurses Association will take a strong position against all forms of bullying and promote anti-bullying education, policies, and contractual language in all bargaining units; and

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Nurses Association will support, in the absence of a federal OSHA standard, the development of national and/or state legislation that mandates comprehensive workplace violence programs for hospitals, healthcare facilities, and other healthcare settings.