

POLITICAL AWARENESS

IT IS THE POSITION OF AMSN THAT:

- The medical-surgical nurse must recognize their inherent power as the largest group of health care professionals to influence change in health policy.
- The medical-surgical nurse has a professional responsibility to secure active participation in the policy-making process and ensure the efforts to establish and maintain high quality standards of nursing care.
- The medical-surgical nurse should collaborate with consumers and members of other health care professions to promote adoption of policies to meet the nation's health care needs.
- The medical-surgical nurse should promote enactment of national practices that protect patients from the incompetent, unethical, or illegal practice of any health provider. Patients and the public benefit from improved health care quality that results from nurses' involvement in health policy.
- The medical-surgical nurse has a responsibility, as a highly educated and knowledgeable health care provider, to share professional expertise with local and national policy makers.

OVERVIEW:

The changes occurring in health care are influenced by forces internal and external to the nursing profession. Medical-surgical nurses in their professional roles are affected by regulations and legislation, and should take an active role in influencing health care policy. Their participation in civic activities and local, state, or national initiatives advances the nursing profession and the overall quality of health care delivery in the United States. The medical-surgical nurse has a responsibility to patients and the community that includes an awareness of issues such as lack of availability of health care or inequitable distribution of health care resources.

RATIONALE:

AMSN supports the active participation of the medical-surgical nurse in the political process by voting in all elections, contacting state and national policy makers regarding pending legislation, and serving on local, state, and/or national governmental agencies.

Nurses, nursing education programs, and nursing associations should prepare the nursing workforce to assume leadership positions across all levels, while public, private, and governmental health care decision makers should ensure that leadership positions are available to and filled by nurses. (IOM, 2010)

DEFINITIONS:

Policy is a plan of action adopted by an individual or social group.

Political awareness is cognitive, attitudinal, and affective involvement in organized society.

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