



MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF NURSING

## **Advocacy 101: How to Influence Public Policy Through Advocacy**

Michigan is currently home to 76 state approved pre-licensure registered nurse (RN) programs and nursing remains the largest licensed health profession in the state. To better serve patients, students, and the nursing profession alike, advocates must speak with a strong and clear voice on the importance of educating highly skilled nurses: 1) to provide high quality, safe and effective patient care; 2) to address the critical need for additional nurses, advanced practice registered nurses and nurse faculty; and 3) to improve access to affordable healthcare to policy makers.

### **What is Advocacy?**

Advocacy is the process of seeking public support or recommendation of a particular cause or policy or drawing attention to an important issue to influence change, or it can be to mobilize others to make changes that impact a broader audience.

### **Why is Advocacy Important?**

- Raises awareness of important issues.
- Creates a presence for your profession at the Capitol.
- Offers a “seat at the table” to provide input on public policy.
- Provides an opportunity to become a content/field expert.
- Can minimize the effect of public policy that can have harmful outcomes.
- Help policy makers understand issues important to your profession.
- Build relationships with policy makers and administrators.
- Can advance meaningful changes for your profession.

### **Simple Steps for Effective Advocacy**

**Step 1.** Familiarize yourself with the operations of state government, the legislative process, relevant laws, and regulations.

**Step 2.** Identify a policy issue and build awareness.

**Step 3.**, Prepare by gathering relevant information on your policy issue and information that supports your position-- before you begin your advocacy efforts.

**Step 4.** Meet with your lawmakers, their staff, and administrators.

**Step 5.** Build and maintain ongoing relationships with policy makers -- key to successful advocacy.

**Step 6.** Stay engaged and be part of the solution.