

Announcement from your AANP FL State Representative

Hello Colleagues!

It was great to see and meet many of you at Nashville last week! The energy was contagious with over 4500 attendees (a record number)! Next year's conference planning is underway (June 23rd-27th in Phoenix , Arizona).

AANP 2009 Annual Florida State Representative Report (Presented at 24th National Conference)

Two bills were filed this year: Clinical Laboratories Bill – HB 53/ SB 408 Sponsored by Senator Mike Fasano and Representative Luis Garcia. This bill will mandates that clinical laboratories accept specimens from ARNPs. Labs are already required to accept specimens from most other licensed health care providers, and ARNPs have been permitted to order lab tests since 1996. Was signed into law by Governor Crist.

ARNP Controlled Substance (CS) Prescribing – SB 426. Sponsored by Senator Mike Bennett and Representative Juan Carlos Zapata. Unfortunately this bill was not passed and in fact was not even on the agenda in the committees despite the Senate Staff Report that was supportive on ARNP prescribing of controlled substances. One argument against the CS prescribing bills over the past years is that FL is the leader in illegal CS access on the streets. To combat this a Controlled Substance Tracking Bill was introduced and was signed into law by Governor Crist. This will eliminate one of the arguments against our CS bill for next year.

Our NP colleagues are leaving our great state of Florida to practice in less restrictive states. You may have seen my request for former Florida NPs to contact me regarding their interest in participating in a survey regarding their reasons for leaving and if there would return. 23 individuals responded. Over 50% responded that practice

restrictions played a moder of a main influence in their decision to leave and 68% responded that they would consider returning should the restraints be lifted.

What has been done? The Florida Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses (FCAPN) developed the White Paper which we presented to Lt Governor Kottkamp in November 2008. The Lt Governor was interested but was noncommittal and stayed neutral. The white paper details what APRNs can do to fill the needs in Florida 's healthcare gaps.

The FCAPN also commissioned the production of the video "Florida 's Healthcare Crisis: the APN Solution" which is available to be viewed at the Florida Nurse Practitioner Network (FNPN) website www.fnpn.org. The video along with packets containing the Senate Report, the White Paper and the AANP Authority to Prescribe map (the map of the United Sates that shows that Florida and Alabama are the only states that can not prescribe CS) were distributed to many of our legislators and their legislative assistants at Lobby Days in March.

Where do we go from here? We need to develop new strategies and strengthen existing ones. We can't give up and give in! We need to advocate for our patients to improve access to care!

The FNPN has established a legislative team and is developing an effective PAC. A targeted PR campaign is in the works. The legislative team is coordinating a statewide effort to meet with each and every legislator in their home district, provide education, show the video etc. Packets are being assembled as we speak.

Let's change our thinking from "it doesn't apply to me" to "there are patients who are suffering from a lack of access to care!" There are patient's who can not get their needed medications. They may not be in your practice but there are patients that are suffering!

What can WE do? What can YOU do? Get involved! Log on to www.fnpn.org, click on Legislative Action, scroll down below

Legislative Action Center , click on Action Center and sign up for Cap Wiz updates. Donate your talents, your time (no matter how much you can give) and your money! Log on to www.fnpn.org. Click on Legislative Political Action Committee and donate. Let's face it! It is going to take each one of us to do one or all of these things if we are going to be able to improve our patients' access to healthcare!

Join your colleagues at the FNP Annual Conference in Tampa on July 17th and 18th. Get inspired by Barbara Safreit JD, the Keynote Speaker. More information available at www.fnpn.org.

If you have any questions or need more information please contact me at doreencassarino@gmail.com

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Nurse Practitioner Council Collier County , Vice President Legislation Florida Nurse Practitioner Network, Secretary Florida Coalition of Advanced Practice Nurses, Executive Board Member American Academy of Nurse Practitioners , Florida State Representative You're keeping up to date with AANP. Are your colleagues? If they are not a member of AANP ask them to join on. If we ALL come together we CAN make the needed changes in health care!