

## **LEGISLATIVE TALKING POINTS**

### **Health in Alabama**

- Ranked 45<sup>th</sup> r/t smoking, obesity, heart disease, premature death, infant mortality, children in poverty, and poor mental health
- Ranked in the top 5 states for death r/t obesity, heart disease and stroke

### **Access to Health Care in Alabama**

- Virtually all of Alabama designated as a health provider shortage area
- Shortages are magnified in rural areas with increased morbidity/mortality
- Ranked 51<sup>st</sup> in access to health care in 2007

### **Cost of Health Care in Alabama**

- Ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in health care spending per person for public health in 2004 (\$159 per person for public health) on top of other health care expenditures
- Cost Alabama citizens approx. \$3500/person for health care in 2004 (more than 17 billion dollars)
- Despite these expenditures, Alabama ranks dismally in health and access to health care

### **Health Care Resources in Alabama**

- Shortfall of primary care physicians (shortfall currently 237); worst in rural areas; inability to retain and attract primary care physicians is a serious on going threat to the rural health care system
- Physicians selecting primary care as specialty continues to decline despite recruitment efforts
- Primary care physicians currently in practice approaching retirement with no primary care physician replacement

### **Untapped Health Care Resources in Alabama**

- Health care outcomes for patients receiving primary care from nurse practitioners are comparable to that of physicians in several studies
- Nurse practitioners provide cost effective primary health care

### **Barriers/Limitations of Nurse Practitioners in Health Care in Alabama**

- The most restrictive environment for NP's in the United States
- Lack of recognition of NP's as health care providers in state law
- Written collaborative requirement with a physician in order to practice/prescribe
- Limited prescriptive authority (Alabama 1 of 3 states not allowing scheduled prescriptive authority)
- NP graduates from Alabama schools leaving the state to practice elsewhere because of these restrictions.
- Some NP's living near border states of Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee chose to work in those states because of better practice environment.