The Purpose

This new program within the Florida Nurses Association focuses on improving the working conditions of Florida registered nurses. It is a member benefit for registered nurses not represented by the FNA collective bargaining program. Five elected commissioners serve as advocates for nurses and develop strategies to address and improve relevant workplace issues. The FNA-WPA program is a member of the national Center for American Nurses with two delegate seats for representation at its annual meeting.

History

While advocacy for nurses has long been the primary focus for the Florida Nurses Association (FNA), a formal program did not previously exist. At the national level, the non-collective bargaining states began to meet to address the issue of a formalized nursing advocacy program and the concept of WorkPlace Advocacy was introduced. Many states adopted this concept and began developments of programs within their states.

At the national level, a task force was formed and after several years, the Center for American Nurses (‘The Center’) was born.

Meanwhile, FNA leadership also formed a task force and steps were taken to make WorkPlace Advocacy a reality for FNA. Bylaws were written and passed, making the program an official program of the association. The Inaugural Commissioners and the delegates to the Annual Meeting of “The Center” were elected during the 2005 elections and the official program was launched. The elected commissioners are Mary Lou Brunell, Chair, Barbara Russell, Elaine Slocumb, Sue Hartranft and Marti Hanuschik. In June 2006 at the Center’s Annual Membership Meeting, it was agreed that the focus of the program was not appropriately represented with the phrase WorkPlace Advocacy and this term was replaced with the phrase WorkForce Advocacy. This more accurately communicates the goals and vision of the program as an advocate for people, not places. Following suit, the Commission chose to make the same revision in Florida’s program, revising the official name to WorkForce Advocacy Program (FNA-WFA).

Who are the Members?

All members of FNA who are not members of an FNA Bargaining Units fall under the WFA membership category. Those members vote in the general election for WFA commissioners and for delegates to the Center for American Nurses official meetings.

Goals of the Program

The concept of the WorkForce Advocacy program is to develop
tools and resources for nurses to utilize in their work life. These resources can come in the form of publications, educational offerings, articles in existing publications, phone consultations related to workplace issues, resources on the web, and many other projects.

One of the goals of the Commission will be to use the membership as a source of information to determine additional needs for the program to address in the future.

Members of the Commission also see possibilities of partnering with L.E.R.C., our collective bargaining leaders to collaborate on some future projects. We believe that unity is the key to creating positive change for the future.

**Center for American Nurses**

FNA- WFA program is an official member of the Center of American Nurses. This means they are entitled to two delegates at the annual meeting and that our members may participate in national committees and initiatives. Currently, Barbara Russell, a WFA Commissioner, serves on the State Demonstration Task Force of The Center.

To learn more about the Center for American Nurses visit their website at www.centerforamericannurses.org.

**Current Products**

**Publications**
- Guidelines for the Registered Nurse in Giving, Accepting or Rejecting a Work Assignment (developed with L.E.R.C.)
- Guidelines for the Registered Nurse in Determining Scope of Practice
- A Guide for Assisting Colleagues who Demonstrate Impairment in the Workplace (developed with IPN)
- New Graduate Handbook
- Nurses’ Professional Portfolio
- Understanding the Nursing Profession in Florida

**Phone Consultation**

FNA has always provided phone consultation to nurses who call regarding a variety of issues. Members may call throughout the business day for phone consultation and non-members may call between the hours of 1pm - 2pm so that we can provide maximum service to our paid members. Members also have access to our toll free number to take advantage of this resource. Some of the most common inquiries are related to scope of practice or requests for referrals for legal counsel. We also get many calls regarding interpersonal communications between professionals.

**Legislative Advocacy**

Political action and legislative action is one of the most effective tools we utilize in advocacy for nurses. We feel that nurses must be a visible and viable force in the political arena and we work to empower nurses in this area in partnership with the Legislative Program of FNA.

**Big Audacious Goal (B.A.G.)**

The WorkForce Advocacy Commission would like to empower nurses to make changes in their own work place through professional self advocacy as well as to unite nurses in one voice to fight for a better work environment for all nurses and therefore a better healthcare system for our citizens.

With our fellow nurses in the workforce as our most valued partners, we can make a difference in what the workplace of the future will look like. We hope that you will join us in this exciting new chapter in the Florida Nurses Association.