

Nurse in Washington Internship

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The Nurse in Washington Internship (NIWI) provides a unique opportunity to communicate with those who design the policy and legislation affecting nursing and health care delivery. Participating in the NIWI program prepares nurses to become a strategic advocate for the profession and healthcare quality and safety.

Individual suggestions are an important source of ideas for legislation, therefore it is important to build coalitions and unite together to raise awareness on patient and nursing issues. The education of nurses regarding health policies is essential to develop partnerships with their local communities. The involvement of nurses is critical to the creation of public policies that will truly support the health of our local communities.

Nurses advocate on the issues that affect patient care and nursing, regardless of partisan support. Nurses are impacted by laws, regulations, and policies in providing care to their patients. Everyday Congress makes decisions that influence our professional nursing practice and the way we provide health care. Therefore, members of Congress need to be contacted by nurses from across the nation throughout the entire year. The most effective communication is while members are at home, especially during local town meetings. A nurse that is passionate and well informed and can communicate effectively is a valued resource to elected officials and their assistants.

The participants represented a variety of specialties, educational levels, and leadership experiences. The experience span was broad with some nurses having a few years of service and others with decades of professional expertise. However, each of us identified the power and responsibility that we held to advocate for our profession and the patients in our care.

While attending the NIWI program I obtained knowledge regarding health care policy, communicating effectively with legislators and their assistants, and the opportunity to collaborate with other nurses to advance important issues facing the nursing profession. The three legislative areas included: (1) Nursing education, (2) Nursing Research, (3) Nursing Practice.

While attending the NIWI I realized the injustices that I have witnessed and just sat there and let it happen. I forgot to use my voice and get involved in the process. I forgot to believe in myself! I have learned that one honest voice can be louder than a crowd and if we let someone else speak on our behalf this country is in serious trouble. Speak up America! Speak up! (Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 2003)

References

Metro Goldwyn Mayer (Producer). (2003). *Legally Blonde 2* [Motion picture]. USA: Metro Goldwyn Mayer.