

February 24th Legislative Update

From Benny Vanatta, AONP Executive Director and Lobbyist

As the Oklahoma Legislature moves into its last week for bills to move out of Senate Committees, I want to update you on two pieces of legislation AONP is working on:

First, is the Full Practice Authority (FPA) legislation. You may be aware from our earlier emails, that Senator Smalley, Chairman of the Health Committee, had agreed to author our FPA legislation - SB 1917. He had agreed to move the bill forward this Legislative session. We were set. Toni Pratt-Reid, AANP-Oklahoma representative and AONP legislative chair; Gina Crawford, lead educator at Oklahoma City University's NP program, and many others from throughout the state worked tirelessly to perfect the SB 1917's wording. We hired a professional who specialized in legislative language to make sure the bill was written to coincide with the way the State Senate does their legislation.

We hit our first hurdle, on January 31, 2020, when Senator Smalley resigned from the Oklahoma Legislature leaving us with no author and the need for a new Chairman to be named. Senator Greg McCortney, from Ada, was named Chair of the Health Committee. Senator Bill Coleman, from Ponca City, agreed to author our legislation. Toni and I met with Senator McCortney, in Ada. We had a great discussion with him about the legislation. He told us he was new and needed to look over all of the legislation before he could make any decisions, but we felt the meeting as very productive. We immediately issued a Call-to-Action to have NPs in his Senate district call, text and email Senator McCortney asking his support for SB 1917. There are more than 50 AONP member NPs in his Senator District. Through those emails, Senator McCortney replied that he would not bring our legislation to the committee to be heard unless we had an agreement with OSMA. We immediately began work with OSMA. We proposed three things:

1. FPA for all NPs who have been in practice for three years,
2. Three years' supervision for all APRN graduates,
3. ADHD drugs and seven days of Hydrocodone from Schedule IIs.

We presented the proposal to the OSMA lobbyist, Matt Robinson, with no success or counter proposal. OSMA supports an old Senator McCortney bill from last year, SB 839, which required a medical board separate from the Board of Nursing, seven years of supervision and approval from both the medical board and the Board of Nursing before a NP could be declared unsupervised. And, oh yeah, that NPs had to wear a badge stating they were UNSUPERVISED. AONP is opposed to SB 839. It was a nonstarter for us last year and still is.

So, we are at a standstill again. SB 1917 has the votes to pass the Senate Committee and the votes to pass the full Senate. We are 100% sure we have the votes in the House of Representatives. That is why OSMA is making sure it isn't allowed to be heard in committee.

Some have asked why we don't start the legislation in the House of Representatives. That action would force House members to make a very hard vote knowing it won't be heard in the Senate. House leadership has asked us not to do that. They support us, but don't want to force a hard

vote like this one, with no hope in the Senate. Some have asked why we don't ask Senate leadership to help, but it is leadership policy not to over-ride a Senate Chairman's decisions.

AONP is not giving up. We will continue fighting for you. We want your help, your thoughts and your prayers. AONP has a new person, Julia Jernigan, who will join me at the Capitol every day to work for you.

The second piece of legislation is the death certificate legislation. It is progressing through the process and moving forward.

In conclusion, the AONP team will continue our work. As the legislative session progresses, we are monitoring bills and making sure nothing gets through that could harm NPs. Always feel free to give us your thoughts, ideas, legislative contacts and stay the course.