

# Nursing's Public Policy Platform

## 1. Increase protection from violence against health professionals in the workplace

While legislation passed during the 2017 session sought to protect health professionals from physical assault, it did not address issues of verbal threats of injury or death. Workplace violence is a serious and ongoing issue for Virginia's nurses and all healthcare professionals. VNA supports legislation to make it a penalty to verbally threaten a healthcare provider with bodily injury or death while the individual is engaged in the performance of his or her duties.

## 2. Ensure that nurse practitioners (NPs) – who provide cost-effective, high-quality healthcare services in diverse settings across the care continuum – are able to bill insurance directly for services.

Since the passage of HB 793 during the 2018 General Assembly provides NPs with the opportunity to transition to autonomous practice, we now need to update the Code of Virginia to make sure that NPs can independently and directly bill insurance for their services.

## 3. Expand nurse practitioner prescribing privileges to include medical marijuana.

Expand legislation passed by Virginia's legislature in 2018 enabling physicians to register with the Virginia Board of Pharmacy in order to issue written certifications for the use of medical marijuana (cannabidiol oil or THC-A oil) to also include nurse practitioners.

## 4. Update prescribing of buprenorphine (Suboxone) for addiction treatment regulations to be consistent with recently passed legislation granting a transition to independent practice for nurse practitioners.

Nurse practitioners are newly allowed to prescribe buprenorphine as part of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act for opioid overdoses. While the Act augments nurse practitioners' scope of practice from a federal standpoint, Virginia is more limiting. Virginia statutory regulations require NPs who have obtained the SAMHSA waiver to prescribe buprenorphine for opioid addiction only pursuant to a practice agreement with a waived MD or DO physician. Nurse practitioners licensed to work independent of a physician practice should be provided the same prescriptive authority.

## 5. Support legislative solutions that create and sustain conditions that support the health and well-being of all Virginians.

Every Virginian deserves the opportunity to live in a state of well-being and have access to safe and affordable healthcare. To ensure the optimal health of our citizens and communities, we must ensure that wellness is factored into decisions related to education, employment, housing, transportation, land use, economic, development, and public safety. We must work alongside community and government partners to support legislative solutions that promote a culture of health and tackle the population health issues highlighted in Virginia's Well-being Plan, and support the establishment of a Commission on Wellness and Opportunity to help facilitate this work.