NLAC Update: OCTOBER 2020

NLAC is scheduled to meet to develop the 2021 Nursing Legislative Agenda Oct. 27, 2020. NLAC will get a legislative outlook for the upcoming 87th Texas Legislature and will hear from the Board of Nursing and key health stakeholders. Please email TNA Government Affairs Coordinator Catherine White at cwhite@texasnurses.org for details.

It's time to vote! The 2020 General Election is Nov. 3, and early voting starts Tuesday, Oct. 13. The voices of Texas nurses have never been more critical than right now.

In mid-September, Texas Nurses Association and Texas Nurse Practitioners joined with League of Women Voters of Texas to present a non-partisan virtual voter information session full of details about changes for the upcoming election, the mail-in ballot process, voter registration, early voting locations and how to vote safely in November, as well as interesting facts about Texas nurses who have been historically impactful in expanding and protecting voting rights. Check out the recording of the session and ensure you and your peers, patients, family and friends are prepped to vote and have the necessary tools and data to make informed decisions.
Enrollment for 2021-2022 NLAC membership begins in November. The 2021 Texas Legislature could be pivotal for addressing important nursing concerns. There is strength and influence in numbers. Join NLAC, and encourage other Texas professional nursing organizations/associations that aren't yet NLAC members to join us in amplifying the voice of nursing at the state capitol. If ever there was a time, it's NOW!

** Follow us on Twitter at @TXNursesLege, the twitter handle for Nursewatch.

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**Capitol Brief Update**

by Kevin C. Stewart, ll

As I’m sure you’re aware, elections are right around the corner! Campaigning during the COVID crisis has certainly been a unique experience for many candidates. Some have taken advantage of this new environment, hosting Zoom town halls and meeting with constituents virtually. Others have been less active. However your specific representative or senator has chosen to campaign during COVID, now is the perfect time to set up a meeting to discuss your issues. Reach out to them — often you will find that they are more responsive than ever.

Regardless of the unusual circumstances, a lot rests on the upcoming election. In the Senate, Republicans need to maintain every seat they hold. To bring up a bill in the Senate, three-fifths of the Senators need to vote in support of doing so. If Republicans lose a seat in this election, they will no longer have the numbers to guarantee their legislation passes. In the House, there is a chance that Democrats win big and take over the chamber. Even if Republicans hold onto the majority, they will need to select a new Speaker, which usually means many new committee chairs.
This uncertainty can make it difficult to plan out your next steps so, above all, my advice is to stay flexible.

House and Senate leadership have still not provided much information on their plans for session. There will certainly be socially distanced committee hearings in the few committee rooms large enough to safely accommodate such hearings. Committees will be forced to move quickly through bills so that they do not monopolize the limited space. Long, drawn out hearings on controversial bills, which often last late into the night, will probably not happen next session. This should be one of the things you consider as you finalize your legislative agendas.

As we move through the election and into session, we will get more clarity on these procedural changes. We will keep you updated as we learn more. In the meantime, thank you for everything that you do! Please stay safe and healthy out there.

Bookmark *Texas Tribune* to get the latest political news!

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**Texas Register: Rules and Regulations**

**October 2, 2020**

**Department of State Health Services**

25 TAC §135.2, §135.26, *Ambulatory Surgical Centers (EMERGENCY)* DSHS has adopted an emergency rule that will allow Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASCs) to expand their treatment options to include other, non-surgical healthcare services. The rule also allows patients to stay in ASCs for more than twenty-three hours and removes reporting requirements for long patient stays and hospital transfers.

**Texas Board of Pharmacy**

22 TAC §315.3, *Prescriptions (PROPOSED)* The Board has proposed amendments that implement the exceptions to the electronic prescribing requirement, as provided in HB 2174. The amendments do not list out each of exemptions listed in the legislation, but it does provide that prescriptions may be written if there is a technological failure, if the dispensing pharmacy is located outside of the state or if
the provider has a waiver from their respective licensing agency.

**Remember ...**
- You can find the *Texas Register* on the Texas Secretary of State website, where **ALL** the rule proposals and adoptions from the Texas BON and other state regulatory agencies are updated weekly on Fridays and published. *Nursewatch* will print some of the more pertinent updates to nursing rules and regulations but you can delve deeper into current and past issues of the *Texas Register* at your leisure on the S.O.S. website.

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**Upcoming Events**

- **Texas Early Voting, October 13-30, 2020**: Avoid election day crowds and possible exposure to COVID-19 and vote early. Click the link to ensure you're registered and find early voting locations in your area.
- **NLAC Fall Meeting, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. CST October 27, 2020**: Email Catherine White (cwhite@texasnurses.org) for details.
- **2020 General Election, November 3, 2020**: Note important dates, make sure you're registered to vote, find out what's on the ballot then exercise your civic duty! Check out the TNA/TNP/LWVTX-hosted Texas voter information session, make a voting plan then get out there and make your voice heard with your vote!

*If your NLAC organization/association is having an open event or you know of a relevant activity/event, please send the information to TNA Government Affairs Coordinator **Catherine White** for inclusion in upcoming issues of *Nursewatch.*

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Contribute to the Texas Nurse PAC today and strengthen nursing's influence with the Texas Legislature in 2021. There has never been a more important time to support nursing's efforts to engage and inform Texas legislators on issues and concerns of the profession. Just $20 can make a **BIG** difference during this election season! **Invest** in your profession. **Invest** in your peers. **Invest in the Texas Nurse PAC today!**
Donations to Texas NURSE PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes.