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NLAC Updates

**NLAC 2018 SPRING MEETING**

The 2018 Spring NLAC meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 19, 2018 at TNA’s new offices: 4807 Spicewood Springs Rd., Bldg. 3 in Austin. Mark your calendars.

This roundtable will provide an opportunity for organizations to share and hear each other’s focus, concerns and goals for the 2019 legislative session.

*Per the membership agreement, each NLAC organization may send 2 representatives. Please contact Cathy White by April 19th to RSVP at cwhite@texasnurses.org, 1-800-862-2022, x 136.*

If you’d like to feature your organization/association events in Nursewatch, please contact Catherine White at cwhite@texasnurses.org with your event details.
The March primaries are behind us. Here are some of the races that we watched:

- More than 30 races are headed to a May 22nd runoff - https://apps.texastribune.org/texas-elections-2018-primary-runoff-candidates/

- Diana Arevalo (Public Health Committee member) lost to former House member Trey Martinez Fischer by 120 votes.

- Texas will very likely send two Latinas to Congress with the wins by Veronica Escobar in El Paso and (current senator) Sylvia Garcia in Houston. There have already been statements by Reps Ana Hernandez and Carol Alvarado that they intend to run for her Senate seat after Garcia’s eventual November win. This will force multiple special elections for the Senate seat and another for their house seats if either wins that election.

- Sen. Carlos Uresti was convicted of 12 felony indictments. Rep. Roland Gutierrez has already indicated his intent to seek the seat when Uresti is no longer in it, either due to his final conviction on appeal and eviction from office or when he steps down. It is unclear if either will happen soon. Uresti is not up for re-election until 2020.

- However, his brother Tomas Uresti was up for re-election this year and unfortunately for him, his surname cost him his seat.

- For all of the posturing and money spent by Gov Abbott, Sarah Davis and Lyle Larson both easily won re-election.

- The House has a dozen seats where the average margin of victory in statewide races has been smaller than 10 percentage points:

Five are held by Democrats: Philip Cortez of San Antonio, Abel Herrero of Robstown, Joe Moody of El Paso, Victoria Neave of Dallas and Mary Ann Perez of Houston. Each will have a Republican opponent and, perhaps, third-party opponents in November.

Seven are held by Republicans: Rodney Anderson of Grand Prairie, Cindy Burkett of Sunnyvale, Tony Dale of Cedar Park, Sarah Davis of West University Place, Larry Gonzales of Round Rock, Linda Koop of Dallas and J.M. Lozano of Kingsville. Burkett gave up her seat for an unsuccessful Senate bid, and Gonzales didn’t seek another term. Both major parties have candidates in those two open seats, and the Democrats have a candidate in each of the others.

To stay abreast of Texas political news, I suggest bookmarking the Texas Tribune at www.texastribune.org
Support our efforts at the Texas Capitol from the comfort of home. Join the growing list of nurses that are investing in their profession and their future by supporting Texas Nurse PAC with a contribution. Go to www.texasnurses.org and click on Texas Nurse PAC under the Advocacy tab to get started.

Upcoming House/Senate Committee Meetings

**March 20** - **Senate Finance** - 10:00 a.m.
Monitor the implementation of the following funding initiative: Behavioral Health - Monitor the state’s progress in coordinating behavioral health services and expenditures across state government, pursuant to Article IX section 10.04, including the impact of new local grant funding provided by the 85th Legislature.

**March 21** - **House Appropriations Article II Subcommittee** - 10:00 a.m.
One issue will be HHSC’s use of appropriated funds to expand Texas’ inpatient psychiatric infrastructure.

**March 21-22** - **Senate Health & Human Services Committee** - 10:00 a.m.
Study efforts by the Department of State Health Services and the Texas Department of Insurance to increase health care cost transparency, including a review of the Texas Health Care Information Collection (THCIC) system, and the Consumer Guide to Healthcare. Recommend ways to make provider and facility fees more accessible to consumers to improve health care cost transparency, increase quality of care, and create a more informed health care consumer base.

Review substance use prevention, intervention, and recovery programs operated or funded by the state and make recommendations to enhance services, outreach, and agency coordination. Examine the adequacy of substance use services for pregnant and postpartum women enrolled in Medicaid or the Healthy Texas Women Program and recommend ways to improve substance use related health outcomes for these women and their newborns. Examine the impact of recent legislative efforts to curb overprescribing and doctor shopping via the prescription monitoring program and recommend ways to expand on current efforts.

**March 27** - **House Select Committee on Opioids & Substance Abuse** - 10:00 a.m.
Study the prevalence and impact of substance use and substance use disorders in Texas, including co-occurring mental illness. Study the prevalence and impact of opioids and synthetic drugs in Texas. Review the history of overdoses and deaths due to overdoses. Also review other health-related impacts due to substance abuse. Identify substances that are contributing to overdoses, related deaths and health impacts, and compare the data to other states. During the review, identify effective and efficient prevention and treatment responses by health care systems, including hospital districts and coordination across state and local governments. Recommend solutions to prevent overdoses and related health impacts and deaths in Texas.

Rulemaking Update - March 2018

**Proposed Rules**
Board of Nursing – The Board has proposed rules regarding minor incidents. There was some confusion as to when a nursing practice error was a minor incident. The proposal is an effort to clarify the rules. The Board also proposed rules that would expand the KSTAR to other potential program providers and implement the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact, which was passed in the last legislative session.

**Adopted Rules**
Board of Nursing – The Board has adopted rules modifying the Good Professional Character and Criminal History rules. The modifications are a result of last session’s sunset legislation, which TNA worked on directly.