

2024 Federal Legislative and Policy Agenda

AWHONN represents the interests of 350,000 nurses working in women's health, obstetric, and neonatal nursing across the United States. The items listed below represent our legislative and policy priorities for 2024.

Empower and support nurses:

- Advocate for strong nursing representation by a culturally, racially, and gender diverse group of nurses on state, federal, and other policy-making bodies, task forces, advisory boards, working groups, and maternal mortality review teams that address women and birthing people's health, neonatal health, and obstetric issues, especially by nurses who are Black, Indigenous and people of color
- Support federal efforts to eliminate the scope of practice barriers for advanced practice registered nurses (nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, and certified registered nurse anesthetists) to practice to the full extent of their education and training to meet the increasing demand for primary care and women and birthing people's health services
- Support federal efforts to increase and enhance the nursing workforce, promote nursing as a profession, and promote and support diversity, which better reflects and represents the communities they serve. These efforts should also support staff retention and eliminate financial barriers to nursing education
- Support for training and equipment to protect nurses on the job and their patients, such as by funding for personal protective equipment, workplace violence prevention training, and interventions. Support federal efforts to increase and enhance the nursing workforce, promote nursing as a profession, and promote and support diversity which reflects and represents the communities they serve. These efforts should also support staff retention and eliminate financial barriers to nursing education
- Oppose legislation and regulations to limit compensation of nurses. Efforts to adequately staff hospitals should focus on meeting the market pay necessary to attract and retain qualified staff, including a qualified nursing workforce

Caring for women and birthing people, newborns, and their families:

- Advocate for health equity to improve outcomes and access to high-quality, equitable, and necessary services for marginalized populations, including women and birthing people who are
 - Incarcerated or detained, including those who are pregnant
 - Living in poverty or low income
 - Experiencing a substance use disorder
 - Black, Indigenous, LatinX, immigrants, and members of historically neglected groups
 - Military members or veterans
 - Currently trafficked or are at risk for human trafficking
 - Excluded for their gender identities or relationship status
 - Disabled
 - Young or advanced age
- Advocate for unrestricted access to preventive health care services such as annual well-woman visits; counseling for reproductive life planning; HPV vaccination; mammograms;

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Empower and support nurses caring for women, newborns and their families through research, education, and advocacy



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cervical cancer screenings; pre-, inter-, and post-conception care; screenings for intimate partner violence, elder abuse, substance use, human trafficking, and mental health; and smoking cessation programs

- Advocate for access to all reproductive services, including abortion care to include treatment for ectopic pregnancy and spontaneous, missed, therapeutic, or elective abortion
- Support initiatives to allow access to a wide range of evidence-based contraceptive options for women who seek them, including
 - Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) for women of all reproductive ages, including adolescents
 - Unrestricted over-the-counter access to hormonal contraceptives (to include oral contraceptives, vaginal rings, the contraceptive patch, and depot medroxyprogesterone acetate injections) that are low-cost and available to people of all ages without restrictions
 - Full contraception coverage by all insurance payers with no out-of-pocket expense
- Support initiatives to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality and improve the physical and mental health status of all pregnant and birthing people, as well as policies designed to increase funding to address racial health disparities, structural and social determinants of health, and resolve health inequities contributing to these issues. Support legislation and funding to address the effects of systemic racism and environmental factors on maternal health and outcomes, including supporting innovative programs and interventions
- Support initiatives to reduce infant mortality and improve the health status of newborns, critically ill infants, and preterm newborns, as well as policies designed to increase funding to address racial health disparities, structural and social determinants of health, and resolve health inequities contributing to these issues. Support for legislation and funding to address the effects of systemic racism and environmental factors on newborn health and outcomes, including supporting innovative programs and interventions
- Support legislation aimed at establishing mandatory federal parental family paid leave in recognition of the positive impact of family leave on breastfeeding outcomes, parental-child bonding, gender equity, and retaining parents in the workforce
- Support legislation that protects, promotes, and supports breastfeeding, including access to no-cost prenatal breastfeeding education and no-cost postpartum lactation support, including support for pumping protections for lactating families who return to the workplace
- Support expanding comprehensive Medicaid coverage to a full year postpartum for all birthing people
- Support improving Medicaid reimbursement for maternity care so that birth centers and hospitals can afford to keep OB units open especially in rural communities and other obstetrical deserts
- Support federal efforts to reduce gun violence and improve gun safety. Intimate partner violence is a leading cause of death among women and often worsens during pregnancy. Limiting access to guns to abusive partners would improve women's safety
- Support for access to adoption counseling services for parents who are considering adoption and post-adoption counseling services for birth parents who place their children for adoption

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- Support for legislation that would prohibit workplace and employment discrimination against, while also requiring reasonable accommodations for, pregnant individuals in the workplace

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