

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

1 Feb 2012

Alabama's nurses will convene in the state Capitol on Wednesday, 15 February 2012 to discuss issues important to the delivery of quality health care in the state.

More than 1,000 nurses and student nurses are expected to attend the rally from 10:00AM – 12:00 Noon at a blocked off Union Street in front of the Alabama State House and behind the historic state Capitol Building. The theme for the day is "Nurses at the Capitol: Alabama Nurses Advancing Healthcare Quality for All Alabamians." The event is sponsored primarily by the **Alabama State Nurses Association** and the **Alabama Coalition of Nursing Organizations**, although many other nurses groups from around the state are participating.

"We want Governor Robert Bentley and the members of the Alabama Legislature to know about obstacles to providing quality health care to the citizens of Alabama, and the part Alabama nurses can play in helping to address the problem" said Dr. Joyce Varner, a professor at the University of South Alabama School of Nursing and the current ASNA President. "We're looking forward to an exciting and informative day in Montgomery."

Among the topics discussed will be the state's impending health care crisis. Nationally, an estimated 340,000 additional registered nurses will be needed by the year 2020. An estimated 55 percent of current RNs anticipate retirement between now and 2020 as the nursing population ages and "baby boomers" begin to retire in significant numbers. In addition, Alabama's Medicaid program anticipates adding 500,000 new patients by 2014 to the current 900,000 citizens currently enrolled as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

Alabama has its' own nursing shortage, but does **not** have a shortage of qualified applicants to enter the nursing profession. In fact, approximately 3,500 bright young people who want to go into nursing are turned away each year from state colleges because of a shortage of faculty available to teach them.

That's why among the top items on the ASNA legislative agenda is funding for nursing scholarships to train future faculty members. Funding has decreased in recent years for graduate nursing education, and this year promises to be the most difficult yet.

ASNA is also supporting legislation to increase what advanced practice nurses, such as Nurse Practitioners, can do. This proposed change would simply allow Nurse Practitioners to do what is already included in their current scope of practice, and for which they are already trained and educated. Many other states already allow this. Unfortunately, Alabama is one of the most restrictive states in the country regarding their practice rules. Studies have shown that giving advanced practice nurses more authority and responsibility can be a significant health care cost cutting measure, while maintaining a very high quality of care standard.

Nurses Day at the Capitol 2012 will include a number of speakers, including remarks by **Gov. (Dr.) Robert Bentley, Sen. Tom Whatley (R) Auburn, Rep. Craig Ford (D) Gadsden, Rep. April Weaver (R) Alabaster and Rep. Greg Wren (R) Montgomery.** Other speakers include **Dr. Joyce Varner**, ASNA President, **Deborah Andrews**, Chief Nurse Executive at Cooper Green Hospital and Chair of the Alabama Coalition of Nursing Organizations; **Dr. Joy Deupree**, President of the Nurse Practitioners Alliance of Alabama; **Dr. Kathleen Ladner**, President of AlaONE; and **David Hambright**, CRNA and President, Alabama Association of Nurse Anesthetists.

The Alabama State University Band and songs by Dr. Bobbie Holt-Ragler will kick the program off at 10:00AM on the steps of the Alabama State House on Union St. Scheduled events will finish at 12:00 Noon. Thereafter, attendees will visit their legislators at the State House.

For more information,
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NURSES AT THE CAPITOL 2012
“Alabama Nurses Advancing Healthcare Quality for All Alabamians”

AGENDA/SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Location: Alabama State House, 11 S. Union St.; Montgomery, AL
Date/Time: Wednesday, 15 February 2012; 10:00AM – 12:00 Noon

- 10:00AM** **Arrival for event. Note: One hour of free (until 15 March) CE is available on line at www.alabamanurses.org for attendees, under the Continuing Education tab.**
Title: “Nurses as Policy Advocates”
- 10:00AM** **Alabama State University Band and Dr. Bobbie Holt-Ragler; Steps of Alabama State House, 11 S. Union St.**
- 11:00AM – 12:00Noon** **Speakers: Steps of Alabama State House, 11 S. Union St.**
- Deborah Andrews, Chief Executive Nurse at Cooper Green (emcee). Alabama Nurses Coalition, Chair.**
- Governor (Dr.) Robert Bentley**
Sen. Tom Whatley (R) Auburn
Rep. Craig Ford (D) Gadsden
Rep. Greg Wren (R) Montgomery
Rep. April Weaver (R) Alabaster
Dr. Joyce Varner, ASNA President
Dr. Joy Deupree, NPAA President
Dr. Kathleen Ladner, ALAONE President
David Hambright, ALANA

Things to Remember:

1. Parking is a problem in Montgomery. Recommend using the public lot for Cramton Bowl football stadium, (which is on Madison Ave.). This parking lot is behind/south of Cramton Bowl, and three blocks east of the Alabama State House. Access from Madison Ave. is off N. Hilliard St. Nearby landmarks include the old Armory next door to Crampton Bowl, the Farmers Market, and Paterson Field baseball stadium (across Madison Ave. from Cramton Bowl.) There are also public lots directly across the street from the entrance to Cramton Bowl on Madison Ave. Note 1: Due to construction in/around Cramton Bowl, some parking has been diverted to lots across Madison avenue from the Bowl. Note 2: Union Street will be blocked off in front of the State House. See map link:

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps?city=Montgomery&state=AL&address=11+S.+Union+St.>

2. Make every attempt to visit your state Representative/Senator while you are in Montgomery. A phone call to their local office prior to the day is best, to try to make an appointment. Contact information for your Representative/Senator can be found at www.legislature.state.al.us. Remember that entrance to the State House is controlled, and has security arrangements similar to airports. Access can be slow, especially with big crowds. The Legislature will be in session, but Wednesday is usually a day reserved for various Committee meetings as opposed to a full business session in the House/Senate Chambers. However, Committee day should give you your best opportunity to actually meet with your Senator/Representative in their office. Small viewing galleries are available to the public from the State House 6th floor (House, 120 seats) and 8th floor (Senate, 85 seats).

3. Dress appropriately for expected weather conditions. The rally will be outside from approximately 10:00AM – 12:00 noon. We also encourage everyone to wear “nurse-specific” attire, i.e. uniform/scrubs, lab coats, nametags identifying you as an RN/LPN. In addition, we will have signs/placards for you to hold during the rally. Please feel free to bring school colors/pom poms/shakers to help show your enthusiasm for the speakers.

JFD/20 January 2012