

NURSE IN WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP for all members:

I just returned from Washington D.C. today, having spent an interesting three days at the Capitol. Thanks to MIOHN and the board for nominating me for this educational adventure on learning how to lobby and send a message to Washington regarding our principles, beliefs and rights. It is an interesting experience that we should all have an opportunity to learn about. The feeling is exhilarating and politics means even more to me after this experience. **Yes, we can all make a change.**

I am guilty of not responding to those letters that come requesting you to write to our senators and political officers. I thought no one reads those chain letters. The senators don't have time to read all the "spam" that comes across their desk. All they will do is delete them and throw them into the trash.

However, they actually do want us to write to them. They want to know what we think and feel on the subject that is presented to them. They have limited knowledge of the agenda and they are looking for any experiences we are willing to share with them. They want to represent us and show that they can make the appropriate decisions.

Myself, representing the Michigan Association of Occupational Health Nurses, along with Joyce Stein who represented the National Association of Neonatal Nurses and Jean Martin, representing the National Pediatric Nurses Association, met with Senator Debbie Stabinow and her staffers, Oliver Kim, Senior Legislative Counsel and Kathryn Kietzman. We also met with Legislative Fellow, Senator Carl Levin's staffer Kevin Glandon, Senior Advisor on Health Care, Vern Ehlers, his staffer Rachel Fenton, and Governor Jenifer's staffer Chris Priest, Federal Policy Advisor. They were all informed and sincere to help us and listen. They listened to our needs and agreed to summarize the information, and present this to their respective Senators, Congressman and The Governor.

The asks that we presented were:

- Shortage of nurses – interestingly, I immigrated to the US in 1976, because of the shortage of nurses in the USA and here we are 32 years later we are still working on the shortage of nursing in the USA
- Nursing research – to increase grants for nursing research
- To place their stand in favor of health care
- To include Occupational Health Nurses at the table for health care reform

At the same time as we were lobbying for universal health care, the insurance companies were lobbying against this. While we were lobbying for electronic health records, there were computer companies lobbying for which program was the best to use. There were

representatives for every illness and injury asking for government money to lobby for their cause. There was representation for victims who had lost family and children, lobbying to get the drunks off the streets and various lobbying agendas continued all day long.

In conclusion I recommend each and every one of you to take the opportunity to get involved. Please run for an office within MAOHN so that you might get a chance to experience NIWI. Please apply for the NIWI Scholarship offered by AAOHN. Not a single member took advantage of this opportunity from AAOHN for 2009. In fact I was the only one who represented all of AAOHN through MAOHN. There was another AAOHN nurse who attended and paid for this conference on her own. The other nursing organizations had strong representations.

Sincerely,

Pearl Kloac, FNP-C, COHN-S