

# WASHINGTON STATE NURSES ASSOCIATION

## What It Is and What It Does

The Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA) is a dynamic, democratic organization through which professional nurses combine and utilize resources to achieve their goals. The philosophy of WSNA includes the following beliefs:

We believe that the Washington State Nurses Association:

1. Belongs to the members
2. Speaks for all registered nurses
3. Is accountable
4. Is a forum for discussion and democratic decision
5. Must be a self-renewing and futuristic organization
6. Is an organization of diverse opinions and beliefs united by common purposes
7. Increases the nurse's effectiveness as a steward of the profession
8. Is responsible to promote and protect the goals and interests of the nurse, the profession of nursing and the consumer

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is a federation of 54 constituent member associations, including 53 state and territorial nurses associations and the Federal Nurses Association. WSNA is the constituent member of the ANA in the State of Washington and as such, represents and advocates for all registered nurses and the profession at the state level while ANA carries out these functions nationally.

Individual members have access to the professional association through its various levels, including the local bargaining units and district associations, as well as directly, through the state and national association. The functions of all levels are complementary and together provide the framework that allows the entire association to speak effectively for all registered nurses in all settings. The voice of the individual member is expressed through participation in the biennial meetings of the WSNA General Assembly where major decisions affecting Association policy and direction are made and by voting in elections of the Association's officers and directors and appropriate policy setting bodies (Cabinet and Councils). Members also elect delegates to the ANA House of Delegates. These delegates in turn elect national officers and establish direction and policies for the national association. Between meetings of the WSNA General Assembly, members may make recommendations for change in policy through the WSNA Board of Directors, Cabinet and Councils.

There are times when Association decisions address the immediate concerns of nurses, and times when they are

futuristic, protecting the profession of nursing. As an association, we seek to protect the interests of the consumer as well as those of the nurse. The term "multipurpose" reflects this broad responsibility. The purposes of WSNA as stated in the bylaws are: "1) to work for the improvement of health standards for all people, 2) to foster high standards of nursing, and 3) to stimulate and promote the professional development of nurses and advance their economic and general welfare."

The program of the Association is a dynamic one which changes in response to the collective concerns of its individual members and in response and anticipation to changes in the health care practice environment. It is the right and responsibility of each member to communicate information and concerns to the Association through calls and letters. The Association's responsibility is to direct the nurse to the appropriate resources available to deal with the concern. Available resources include staff, the Board, Cabinet, Councils, Committees, forums, affiliates, districts, local units, the national association and/or other individuals or groups with specific expertise.

The Purposes, Vision, Mission and Goals of WSNA are met through a coordinated process of strategic planning and the assignment of work to the various organizational units. The WSNA Board, in conjunction with representatives of the Cabinet on Economic and General Welfare, Legislative and Health Policy Council and Professional Nursing and Health Care Council, annually establish the priorities of the Association and assign the work of the organization to achieve the organization's goals. WSNA provides leadership and support for the profession and promotes through appropriate means, professional standards of nursing practice, economic and general welfare, legislation and regulation, public policy, nursing education, public relations, ethics and human rights.

Peer support, networking, mentoring and leadership development are also important functions of the Association. The active participation of all nurses in WSNA strengthens its effectiveness as a multipurpose organization and the future of the profession and the individual practitioner demands a unified commitment to this goal.