

To: Twyila Lay, ACNP, MS
President, AANN

From: Lawrence Chyall, RN ,MS, CNRN

Date: 17 May 2017

Re: NIWI 2017

Dear Twyila:

I would like to extend my thanks to the Membership and Board AANN for giving me the opportunity to attend the 2017 Nurses in Washington Internship. The program increased my knowledge of the advocacy process, increased my confidence in my ability to be an effective advocate for neuroscience patients, and provided me with a set of tools to be a better advocate. Additionally, the program provided excellent networking opportunities and enabled me to recruit a fellow AANN member and NIWI attendee to the Advocacy Committee.

The seminar met over three days in March. The stated goals were:

- Describe how nurses can be involved and influence policy at the local and national level.
- Discuss how to work effectively with legislative staff to advance policy agendas.
- Describe key steps to effect change in the legislative process.
- Identify techniques to advance legislative issues at the grassroots level.
- Identify legislative, political, and economic forces driving health care policy and delivery changes today.
- Learn to schedule Capitol Hill meetings

It is my assessment that these goals were met. I received high quality training on the legislative process. I was also educated on how to best present my issue of concern to a legislator or their aid. As a part of the education, I was provided with the opportunity to role play discussing my concern.

The most effective and useful part of the program was the opportunity to meet with legislative aids from the offices of Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Sen. Kamala Harris, and Sen. Dianne Feinstein. During these meetings I advocated for full funding of Title VII and increased funding for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR). I was pleased to find out that although the President's budget severely cut funding for the NIH, the budget prepared by the House of Representatives increased funding for the NIH, including NINR. While I certainly would not attribute the House budget to my nascent advocacy efforts, I was nonetheless very satisfied to see that the House has an interest in nursing research.

Through these meetings I initiated a relationship with people who have a direct influence on policy. Even though it has only been a few months since the program, I have reached out to my newly formed contacts in Washington to advocate for TBI patients being cared for in the Veterans Administration Health System. I travel to the Washington area every year or so to visit friends. On my next trip I plan to use my new skills to schedule meeting with my representatives

and advocate for patients and nurses. To be frank, I was astonished how readily one can set up a brief meeting with one's representative or their aid and to find them keenly interested in nursing.

It is also important to note skills I learned to apply at a national level are readily transferable to advocacy at a state and local level - and I certainly plan to use them.

In summary, the knowledge and skills I gained through this internship has enabled me to be to be a more confident and effective advocate. And I think these skills will serve me well as I move into a leadership role on the AANN Advocacy Committee. I would encourage the Membership and Board to continue their support of this program.

Best Regards,

Lawrence