

### *Political Action Awareness*

Professional nursing organizations exist at the local, state, national, and international levels. These organizations have become the voice for nurses, advocate for the profession and nurses, lobby on health care issues affecting nurses and the public, and work to make changes in health care (Mathews, 2012). Nurse leaders remain current on political health issues by networking with other professional organizations, governmental agencies, and lawmakers. In this paper a current political issue addressed by a professional nursing organization will be selected and discussed. The paper provides an explanation on how nurse leaders use professional organizations to stay informed about political actions in the nursing and health care industry and concludes with a discussion on the importance of maintaining political awareness.

#### **Professional Organization and Current Political Issue**

The New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) was founded in 1901 and is the country's first state nurses association. NYSNA's mission includes supporting and encouraging registered nurses (RNs) and improving the public's health by providing leadership in the health care environment. The organization represents approximately 30,000 RNs (NYSNA, 2013).

One current political issue the organization addresses is safe staffing ratios. NYSNA has been advocating for safe staffing ratios for more than a decade. The Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act (A921/S453) remains one of many priority legislations; this act was last amended and presented in 2013 in the Assembly legislative session (NYSNA, 2013). If the bill is enacted, this law would set nurse-to-patient ratios in New York health care facilities. Nurses would have reduced workloads, more time to spend with patients, improved job satisfaction, and lower turnover rates. Additionally, the quality of care would improve and the health care industry