Purpose:
To provide information and instructions about nominations, qualifications, and elections for members of the North Carolina Board of Nursing.

Objective:
Discuss the privilege held by North Carolina nurses to nominate and elect the nursing members of the North Carolina Board of Nursing.

The mission of the North Carolina Board of Nursing (Board) is to protect the public through the regulation of nursing practice. Over the years, the Board has grown to license more than 147,300 nurses (125,389 registered nurses and 21,976 license practical nurses).

Do You Know ....
- North Carolina licensed nurses have a privilege not held by other nurses in the United States. The North Carolina licensed nurse has the privilege to nominate, vote, and elect the nursing members to the North Carolina Board of Nursing.
- Elections for members of the North Carolina Board of Nursing are conducted annually. Elections are held from July 1st to August 15th.

The percentage of nurses that voted in the 2015 election was 3%.
- Every nurse holding an active North Carolina nursing license is eligible to vote in the annual North Carolina Board of Nursing elections. Candidate positions for the 2016 NC Board of Nursing Elections of nurse members are: Nurse Educator - Practical Nurse Educator, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, and Registered Nurse – Staff Nurse.
- Nurses of North Carolina can preserve their privilege to elect members to the Board of Nursing by participating in the annual elections. Nurses of North Carolina have been given a great privilege to elect the members of the Board of Nursing. This privilege is sustained through active voting by the nurses of North Carolina. VOTE!

North Carolina is the only state in the nation in which the nurses have the privilege to nominate and elect nursing members to the Board. Eleven of the 14 Board of Nursing members are nurses and are elected by nurses holding a valid North Carolina nursing license. Participating in the election of Board members enables nurses to pro-actively and significantly influence the decisions and directions of nursing practice in North Carolina.

Composition of the Board of Nursing
The Board of Nursing consists of 14 members composed of eight elected registered nurses; three elected licensed practical nurses; and three public members appointed, one by the Governor and two by the General Assembly. Members of the Board serve a four-year term. The four-year terms are staggered so that vacancies are consistently filled while maintaining a Board of experienced members. A Board member may not serve on the Board for more than two consecutive four-year terms or eight consecutive years.

Qualifications of Members Elected to the Board of Nursing
Elected Board members are composed of eight registered nurses and three licensed practical nurses. The minimum employment requirement for each registered nurse and licensed practical nurse on the Board is continuous employment equal to or greater than fifty percent (50%) of a full-time position.

The qualifications for each registered nurse position are:
- Nurse administrator (1 position) – is
employed by a hospital or a hospital system, has accountability for the administration of nursing services, and is not directly involved in patient care;

- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) (1 position) – meets the requirements to practice as a certified registered nurse anesthetist, a certified nurse midwife, a clinical nurse specialist, or a nurse practitioner;
- Staff nurses (2 positions) – individuals primarily involved in direct patient care regardless of the practice setting;
- At-large registered nurse (1 position) – registered nurse that is not currently an educator in a nursing program that leads to licensure or granting a degree;
- Nurse Educators (3 positions): must meet the minimum education requirements established by the Board’s education program standards for nurse faculty. The positions are:
  - Practical nurse educator (1 position)
  - Associate degree or diploma nurse educator (1 position)
  - Baccalaureate or higher degree nurse educator (1 position)
- Hold a current, unencumbered license to practice as a registered nurse in North Carolina and be a resident of North Carolina;
- Have a minimum of five years of experience as a licensed practical nurse;
- Have been engaged continuously in the position of a licensed practical nurse for at least three years immediately preceding election; and
- Provide evidence that the employer of the licensed practical nurse is aware that the nurse intends to serve on the Board.

The qualifications for the three licensed practical nurse positions are:

- Hold a current, unencumbered license to practice as a licensed practical nurse in North Carolina and be a resident of North Carolina;
- Have a minimum of five years of experience as a licensed practical nurse;
- Have been engaged continuously in the position of a licensed practical nurse for at least three years immediately preceding election; and
- Provide evidence that the employer of the licensed practical nurse is aware that the nurse intends to serve on the Board.

**Powers and Duties of the Board of Nursing [G.S. 90-171.23]**

The North Carolina Board of Nursing is charged by General Statute to hold at least two meetings each year for the transaction of business. The Board meets three (3) times per year in the following months: January, May, and September. Board meetings are open to the public and attendance is encouraged. The duties and responsibilities empowered to the Board by the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) are:

- Administer and issue interpretations of the NPA.
- Adopt, amend, or repeal rules and regulations necessary to implement the NPA.
- Establish qualifications and employ an executive officer who shall be a registered nurse and who is not a member of the elected Board.
- Employ other personnel to implement the NPA.
- Examine, license, and renew the licenses of duly qualified applicants for nursing licensure.
- Investigate and take appropriate disciplinary action for all persons violating the NPA.
- Establish standards for nursing education programs; to include standards to be met by students, faculty, curricula, facilities, resources, and administration of the programs.
- Grant or deny approval for nursing programs, and review all nursing education programs at least every eight years or more often as necessary.
- Grant or deny approval of continuing education programs for nurses.
- Maintain records of all proceedings and provide an annual summary of actions.
- Appoint as necessary, advisory committees to deal with any issue under study.
- Appoint and maintain a subcommittee of the Board to work jointly with the subcommittee of the Board of Medical Examiners to develop rules and regulations to govern the performance of medical acts by registered nurses.
- Recommend and collect fees for licensure, renewals, examinations, and re-examinations.
- Implement the interstate compacts to facilitate the practice and regulation of nursing.
- Establish and provide programs for aiding in the recovery and rehabilitation of nurses who experience chemical addiction or abuse, or mental or physical disabilities.
- Request criminal background checks for applicants applying for licensure.
- Implement and regulate continuing competence in the practice of nursing at the time of license renewal or reinstatement.
- Order the production of any records concerning the practice of nursing relevant to a complaint received, an inquiry, or investigation by the NCBON.

**Elections of Board of Nursing Members**

Elections for Board members are held annually by the Board to fill vacancies of nurse members for the upcoming year. Nominations for candidates for election (RN and LPN) to the Board member vacancies are submitted to the Board annually between January 1st and April 1st:

- Candidates nominated for election of registered nurse members would need to submit the written petition of nomination (available from the Board) along with at least 10 registered nurses’ signatures endorsing the nomination.
The endorsing registered nurses must be eligible to vote in the election.

- Candidates nominated for election of licensed practical nurse members would need to submit a written petition of nomination (available from the Board) along with at least 10 licensed practical nurses’ signatures endorsing the nomination. The licensed practical nurses must be eligible to vote in the election.

- Eligibility requirements for voting for Board members are:
  - Registered nurses with an active North Carolina license are eligible to vote in the election of the registered nurse Board members.
  - Licensed practical nurses with an active North Carolina license are eligible to vote in the election of the licensed practical nurse Board members.

- Appointments of public Board members are: one by the Governor and two by the General Assembly.

**Perspectives from Former Board Members**

**Gene Tranbarger, EdD, RN, MSN, FAAN**, served in a registered nurse position as a member of the Board from 1979 to 1986 and provides a perspective of his service.

In the 1970's appointment to the Board of Nursing was by the Governor. The only qualification required for appointment was a current, unrestricted license to practice nursing in North Carolina as a Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse. The Governor also appointed two physicians licensed to practice in North Carolina and two Hospital Administrators.

The Task-force of nurse leaders charged with reviving the practice act determined the need for additional numbers of nurses due to a significant increase in the work demanded of the nurse members. In those days, the nurse members of the Board administered the licensure examinations and the Joint Sub-Committee of the Board of Medical Examiners and Board of Nursing reviewed applications for approval of Nurse Practitioners and their supervising Physician. Additionally it was felt that it would be useful to have nurses with a variety of nursing expertise to strengthen the Board's regulation of practice.

Conversations between the Governor and a representative of the Task-force indicated the Governor was not supportive of listing multiple qualifications for appointment to Boards. Discussion by the Task-force led eventually to a decision to change appointment by the Governor to election by individuals licensed to practice as registered nurses in NC for the RN members and by individuals licensed to practice as LPNs for the LPN members. The general wisdom was the election versus governor appointment could be used as a bargaining chip to succeed in writing in qualifications for appointment to the Board.

No one in the Governor's Office challenged the election and the qualifications and increased numbers of RN members of the Board was agreed to, written into the draft of the Act and adopted by the General Assembly.

The draft of the Practice Act established a transition period of four years. Each year an election would be held and one fourth of the existing Board would be replaced by the elected members. This would allow for transition to the new Board while continuing to have experienced members of the Board remain to assure continuing expertise during the transition period. Non-nurse stakeholders objected to the transition plan and demanded a total Board replacement by the first election. This was drafted into the Act and passed the General Assembly.

North Carolina has now had an elected Board since 1980 and remains the only Board of Nursing in the United States where licensees elect the members of the Board. The election process is not inexpensive and participation in the election is not impressive. Most individuals motivated to serve on the Board of Nursing over the years have served the Board with distinction. The Board of Nursing has continued to demonstrate excellence in regulating nursing practice. The public has been well-served by an elected Board. Our responsibility is to continue to demand excellence by monitoring the election process and voting for the best qualified candidates.

**Patricia A Beverage, LPN** served as a licensed practical nurse member on the NCBON from 1996 to 2001 and shares her perspective.

I have recently retired after serving as a Licensed Practical Nurse for 41 years. As most new retirees do, I reflect on my professional experiences, and look forward to the future. Beyond working with the many patients, I can honestly say that being an active North Carolina Board member was especially rewarding. There was so much to learn about the process of regulation, education and practice of our profession. During my two terms I participated in numerous hearings keeping the goal of protecting the public foremost, while maintaining compassion for the licensees who appeared before the Board. In addition, as a Board member I was afforded the opportunity to travel and was privileged to meet others in the nursing profession on a state and national level.

We are so privileged to be able to vote for the representatives on our Nursing Board. I believe it gives nurses genuine input into regulating our own profession, as opposed to outsiders telling us what needs to be done. In North Carolina the Board is independent, as opposed to an “umbrella” agency. This independence allows Board members and staff opportunities to research many topics to improve nursing not only for those in practice, but for those we care for.

I cannot encourage NC nurses enough to take the time to serve on their Board of Nursing. The privilege of being able to vote for that representation should be exercised by ALL RNs and LPNs in this state. It is comparable to political voting, if you don’t vote, then your voice is not heard.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many nurses who voted for me during my two terms on the Board. They made it possible for me to serve all the citizens of North Carolina in a very meaningful way. I am also indebted to NC Board Executive Directors Carol Osman and Polly Johnson and to the Board staff for the guidance and friendship they extended to me during my tenure.

In closing, not only do I recommend that each licensed nurse vote in North Carolina, but I also recommend that you consider running for the Board yourself should you have inclination. I can’t help but think that you will find it a most rewarding experience.
A NURSING PRIVILEGE
The opportunity to elect nursing members to the Board of Nursing is a privilege held by nurses of the state of North Carolina. In the words of former Board member, Patricia Beverage, LPN “… not only do I recommend that each licensed nurse vote in North Carolina, but I also recommend that you consider running for the Board yourself should you have inclination. I can’t help but think that you will find it a most rewarding experience.” VOTE July 1 – August 15th, 2016!

Instructions for Voting
Voting begins July 1, 2016 and continues to August 15, 2016 at midnight

Voting for Board members is as easy as a clicking a computer mouse. Vote online from any location via computer, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

Vote with or without Receiving Continuing Education Credit

Steps for voting are:
• Have available your nursing license number and year of birth
  o An easy way to obtain your license number is to verify it on-line at the NCBON website www.ncbon.com, select “Verify License” and enter your name or social security number.
• Access the NCBON website if not already done so at www.ncbon.com
• On the Homepage, click on the vote logo under Information Spotlight.
• Then follow the instructions as indicated.
• You will have two options:
  1. Vote and receive Continuing Education Contact Hours (See EARN CE CREDIT below for instructions), or
  2. Vote without Receiving Continuing Education Credit.
• Follow the instructions on the appropriate link.

EARN CE CREDIT - “NORTH CAROLINA NURSES VOTE in 2016!” (2 CH)

INSTRUCTIONS
Read the article. There is not a test requirement, although reading for comprehension and self-assessment of knowledge is encouraged.

RECEIVE CONTACT HOUR CERTIFICATE
Go to www.ncbon.com and scroll over “Nursing Education”; under “Continuing Education” select “Board Sponsored Bulletin Offerings,” scroll down to the link, NORTH CAROLINA NURSES VOTE in 2016!

Register, be sure to write down your confirmation number, complete and submit the evaluation, and print your certificate immediately.

If you experience issues with printing your CE certificate, please email practice@ncbon.com. In the email, please provide your full name and the name of the CE offering (North Carolina Nurses Vote in 2016).

Registration deadline is 8-15-2016.

PROVIDER ACCREDITATION
The North Carolina Board of Nursing will award 2.0 contact hour for this continuing nursing education activity.

The North Carolina Board of Nursing is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the North Carolina Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

NCBON CNE CONTACT HOUR ACTIVITY DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
The following disclosure applies to the NCBON continuing nursing education article entitled “NORTH CAROLINA NURSES VOTE in 2016!”

Participants must read the CE article in order to be awarded CNE contact hours. Verification of participation will be noted by online registration. No financial relationships or commercial support have been disclosed by planners or writers which would influence the planning of educational objectives and content of the article. There is no endorsement of any product by NCNA or ANCC associated with the article. No article information relates to products governed by the Food and Drug Administration.