Your Voice, Your Vote: NCBON Election 2019

Purpose:
The purpose of this article is to provide NC licensees a historical overview of the Board of Nursing’s establishment of an election system whereby the nurses of NC elect a majority of its board members. Additionally, to provide information regarding the Board’s major duties and responsibilities, Board composition and positions as well as reflections from current Board members and past voters. The information provided in this article will provide licensees information regarding qualifications to become a candidate, as well as providing guidance to access slate of candidates to assist in voting decision-making.

Outcome:
Licensed nurses will increase their knowledge related to board composition, duties and responsibilities of the Board, use of the candidate biographies in voting decision-making, and the election process. Knowledge regarding the Election of Nurse Members will increase the number of nurses participating in the election annually.

We stand alone!
North Carolina is the only state in the nation that elects its nurse members. Eleven of the fourteen members are elected by nurses holding North Carolina nursing licenses. This is a unique process and opportunity for the licensed nurses of NC. In other states, the board members are appointed by government officials. Election of Nurse Members provides the licensed nurses of NC a voice in the selection process, as well as provides licensed nurses the opportunity for leadership on a state level. This could be an opportunity for NC licensed nurses to be at the table during discussions to raise questions, dialogue, and make the policies that impact the profession of nursing.

But wait... in order to know where you are going, you have to first look at where you have been.
Founded in 1903, the NC Board of Examiners, now known as the NC Board of Nursing, was the first Board of Nursing in the nation. Mary Lewis Wyche, recognized as the first registered nurse in the United States, was the first individual appointed to the NC Board of Examiners. At that time there were only 35 nurses licensed. Of those 35 licensed, Josephine Burton from Craven County was the first state-registered nurse and Annie Lowe Rutherford, a graduate of Freedman’s Hospital in Washington, DC, was the first African American Nurse. In 1929, the first male registered nurse endorsed into North Carolina from Pennsylvania. From those early years, the Board has grown to license over 159,000 registered nurses and licensed practical nurses statewide. Today, your Board of Nursing is recognized statewide and nationally for its leadership in healthcare and innovation. For more information on the BON’s rich history, visit our website at https://www.ncbon.com/board-information-historical-information.

Present Day Mission and Vision!
The Board’s mission to “protect the public by regulating the practice of nursing” and vision “exemplary nursing care for all” drive the work of Board members as they set policy regarding nursing practice in the state. The Board’s values of professionalism, accountability, commitment and equity drive Board members and staff in carrying out the Board’s daily responsibilities. In addition to focusing on our present, the Board also serves as visionaries to project the Board’s growth in an everchanging healthcare environment. The Mission, Vision and Values are a driving force for the Board’s Strategic Plan, a 4-year vision. The components of quality improvement, effective communication and utilization of relevant technology are integral to the plan and inherently woven into each of the strategic initiatives. Learn more about the Board’s vision by accessing the current Strategic Plan at https://www.ncbon.com/board-information-governance-strategic-plan.

Oh the possibilities!
“You’re off to Great Places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting,
So... get on your way!” (Seuss, 1990)

Why not follow Dr. Seuss’ lead to climb the mountain and consider...
running as a candidate for the Board of Nursing?

When reflecting on his service with the Board, Frank DeMarco, Chair, wrote “As nurses we learn very early on in our careers that we have the responsibility to advocate for our patients and families. As a nurse leader in an organization that responsibility is amplified as our oversight of nursing practice widens. As a board member our actions and decisions are focused on protecting the public. From a personal perspective, I have integrated that obligation to enhance my ability to be a patient advocate. In addition, I have become a resource for the nursing staff as well as the nurse leaders in my organization as it relates to the NC BON” (personal communication, April 5, 2019).

Let’s look at how your professional climb up the mountain begins... Are you qualified for a Board Position?
The Board, in accordance with the Nursing Practice Act and Administrative Rules Chapter 36, defines the minimum requirements for nurses to both seek election to the Board and maintain the position once elected. Minimum requirements include:

- Hold a current unencumbered license to practice in North Carolina
- Declare North Carolina as the primary state of residence
- Have a minimum of five years of experience in nursing
- Have been engaged continuously in a position that meets the criteria for the specified Board position, for at least three years immediately preceding the election.

In addition, licensees must have continuous employment equal to or greater than 50% of a full-time position that meets the criteria for the specified Board member position.

You meet the minimum qualifications to run for a position. Now let’s take a look at the individual position requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registered Nurses (8)</th>
<th>Licensed Practical Nurses (3)</th>
<th>Public Members (3)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Administrator employed by a hospital or hospital system (1)</td>
<td>Any practice setting</td>
<td>Appointed by: Governor Senate House</td>
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<td>Advanced Practice Nurse (1)</td>
<td>Staff Nurse (2)</td>
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<td>At-Large Registered Nurse (1)</td>
<td>Nurse Educator (3)</td>
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<td>Positions on the Board are defined within the Nursing Practice Act (G.S. 90-171.21) as follows:</td>
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<td>- Nurse Administrator employed by hospital or hospital system must be a Chief Nurse Executive or director of nursing services for a major service division that includes inpatient care. The Nurse Administrator is accountable for administration of nursing services and not directly involved in patient care.</td>
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<td>- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse may be a Nurse Practitioner (NP), Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), Certified Nurse Specialist (CNS) or a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA).</td>
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<td>- Staff Nurses are primarily involved in direct patient care regardless of practice setting. The legislative intent is that staff level RNs, not those in APRN roles, fill this position.</td>
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<td>- At-Large Registered Nurse is defined as any currently licensed RN other than a nurse eligible for a nurse educator position. This position also allows for a retired nurse as long as the minimum requirements are met to include a current, unencumbered license.</td>
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<td>- Nurse Educator is any nurse who teaches in or directs a Board approved nursing program. The individual must meet the minimum education requirements as established by the Board’s education program standards for nursing faculty. A nurse educator is not eligible to run in the At-Large position as there are 3 Nurse Educator positions on the Board: Practical Nurse Educator, ADN/Diploma Nurse Educator and BSN/Higher Degree Nurse Educator.</td>
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<td>- Licensed Practical Nurses in any practice setting may run for a position on the Board as long as they meet the minimum requirements.</td>
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<td>- Public Members shall not be a provider of health services, employed in the health services field or hold a vested interest at any level in the provision of health services. In addition, no public member or person in the public member’s immediate family (spouse or dependent’s minor child) shall be currently employed as a licensed nurse or been previously employed as a licensed nurse.</td>
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Once the nomination process is complete, nominees for each of the nurse positions complete and submit a candidate packet which provides information related to licensure and employment in order for staff to determine whether or not a nominee qualifies to run in the Board position. Once the qualification process is complete and you are an official candidate for a Board position, the rest is
up to you! This is your opportunity to engage the licensed nurses of NC to vote in the election process!

Why are public members important to the Board’s composition?

You might be asking yourself “what does it mean to be a public member?” The BON has three public members. One public member is appointed by the Governor and the remaining two are appointed by the General Assembly. Public members bring different perspectives and expertise to the discussions. Public members are eligible to serve on all committees, serve as chair or vice-chair of the BON, and discuss and vote on all decisions coming before the BON for consideration.

Martha Ann Harrell, a public member, reflected on her service “Through my experiences and interactions with the members of this board and with the North Carolina Health Care Community as a whole, I have grown to understand and know that policies and procedures are in place to protect the public. I see today how the public’s healthcare experiences, including my own personal experiences, have been positively impacted by decisions and programs enacted by this board and the health and safety of our community is better for it. Additionally, through the multiple roles that I have served within this board, I have gained valuable leadership skills and the unique ability to engage and encourage all thoughts and opinions from others to access situations through an objective lens and with the collective best interest as a goal” (personal communication, April 7, 2019).

Additionally, Martha Ann Harrell reflected “Serving as a public member to this board, allows for me to be a voice of the general public, and my voice is valued by all members and within all decisions to ensure that our mission and our focus is never lost” (personal communication, April 7, 2019).

Congratulations! You have been elected to the Board! Now let’s get started!

If elected to the Board, nurses serve a 4-year term. Newly elected and appointed Board members are sworn into office at the January Board meeting following the election and serve through December 31st of the 4th year. At the end of the 4-year term, a nurse may choose to run for re-election. No board member shall serve more than 2 consecutive 4-year terms or 8 consecutive years.

It is estimated an average of 30 days per year is required to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Board. The time commitment for board members is based on the number of committee assignments. In addition to the three full board meetings held in January, May and September of each year and the five scheduled Administrative Hearings, board members serve on additional BON committees. These committees are assigned yearly and are based on the board members area of interest or expertise. The various BON committees include Education and Practice, Licensure Review Panel, Finance, Board Governance, Settlement, Hearing Committee, Joint Sub and Midwifery Committee. Each of these committees support the work of the Board and are driven by mission of public protection. In addition to meetings, there is needed time to prepare for meetings by reviewing any documents provided pertinent to the meeting. The documents are provided electronically and in advance of meetings. Preparation is key to efficient, productive, and mission-driven decisions and dialogue.

As a Board member, what are the major duties and responsibilities of my position?

The major duties and responsibilities of BON board members are defined in the Nursing Practice Act (GS 90-171.23). A portion of the duties are listed below:

- Issue its interpretations Nursing Practice Act (i.e. position statements and decision trees). These can be found on the BON website www.ncbon.com
- Adopt, amend or repeal rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of the Nursing Practice Act (NPA)
- Establish qualifications of, employ, and set the compensation of an executive officer who shall be a registered nurse and who shall not be a member of the Board
- Examine, license, and renew the licenses of duly qualified applicants for licensure.
- Investigate and take appropriate action for violations of NPA.
- Establish standards and monitor nursing programs that lead to initial licensure
- Implement and monitor continuing education of nurses
- Appoint advisory committees
- Appoint and maintain a subcommittee of the Board to work jointly with the subcommittee of the North Carolina Medical Board to develop rules and regulations to govern the performance of medical acts by registered nurses
- Recommend and collect such fees for licensure, license renewal, examinations and reexaminations
- Implement the interstate compact
Still not convinced your vote has any value? Let’s see what nurse voters say about their experience.

“It is a part of my professional duty and it gives me the opportunity to have some influence on the decision-making process that affects the practice of nursing in North Carolina.” – Hope Y.

“It gives me a voice in the selection of a candidate. I love being a nurse and I want to be involved in every aspect of the profession.” – Dot T.

“I am honored to have a voice in selecting each position that is open. Reading backgrounds lets me know what they have accomplished in their career and how each has made a difference in the practice of nursing.” – Hutch A.

“We worked hard to get the right for nurses to vote for their own representation rather than having BON members appointed by the legislature.” – Donna M.

“Nurses in many states don’t have this important right – it’s a way of making my voice count in my profession” – Pamela B.

“It is a professional obligation to ensure qualified persons are selected to make decisions about professional behavior and protect the public from irresponsible practice.” – Susan R.

“The BON affects the practice of us all.” – Tammy H.

“It is a professional responsibility that moves us into the future and keeps nursing on the cutting edge of advancements.” – Jessica VE.

“As a registered nurse, I (now) understand the importance of having highly qualified board members who are charged with making policy changes that will affect my practice. Having a diverse group at the table for decision-making is vital.” – Carlene C.

- Establish programs for aiding in the recovery and rehabilitation of nurses who experience chemical addiction or abuse or mental or physical disabilities and programs for monitoring such nurses for safe practice
- Establish programs for aiding in the remediation of nurses who experience practice deficiencies

Now that you’ve learned more about your Board, why is voting so important?

Participating in the election is a significant way to influence the decisions that affect your nursing practice in North Carolina. Just like in governmental elections, you have the ability to elect candidates you feel are best qualified to carry out the duties and responsibilities related to your nursing practice. The Slate of Candidates, which contains biographical information, is available on page 12 of this issue. Take the time to get to know your candidates prior to casting your vote!

Speaking of voting, the process is quick and easy! In fact, the process is even more streamlined this year! Effective July 1, 2019, licensees will access the electronic election system through their individual Gateway accounts. Licensees are no longer required to provide license numbers and year of birth in order to vote. Simply log into your individual Gateway account, locate the logo for the electronic election system and you’re on your way! Before you cast your vote, be sure to review the Slate of Candidates which will be posted on your Gateway account. For more information on the new voting system, see the article Gateway Voting on page 11 of this issue. Voting is open from July 1st through August 15th annually.

Are you ready to climb that mountain?

Each year in the Fall and Winter issue of the Bulletin, the magazine published by the NCBON, a nomination form is published seeking licensed nurses in NC who are interested in running for a position on the BON. The nomination form includes the guidelines for submitting a nomination along with the positions available for the upcoming election. Keep in mind. . .

- RNs nominate RNs; LPNs nominate LPNs
- Petitioners provide certificate number and signature
- Information is verified with the records of the Board to validate each nominee and petitioner holds appropriate NC licensure
- Nomination forms must be postmarked on or before April 1st to be considered for candidacy.
- For detailed information regarding the nomination process, visit the Board’s website at https://www.ncbon.com/board-information-election-general-information.

Yolanda M. VanRiel, Vice-Chair, reflected on her service “Being a board member has expanded my knowledge base as an educator not only at my
institution but across the state. I have an in-depth understanding of the Nursing Practice Act and the rules that affect regulation, education and practice. I have participated in strategic planning and governance that impacts every licensed nurse in the state. I take this understanding and apply it to my teaching for my prelicensure and graduate students” (personal communication, April 5, 2019).

Nomination forms are due April 1st annually.

Positions available for the 2020 elections are….

- Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
- Staff Nurse (1)
- Practical Nurse Educator

You may recognize there are no LPN positions listed for the 2020 election. The next LPN position will be available in 2021.

Still unsure about running for a Board position? Perhaps our current members can convince you to start climbing the mountain.

Yolanda Van M. VanRiel, NCBON Vice-Chair, provided the following advice for a nurse considering seeking nomination to serve on the Board: “NCBON is the only board of nursing in which members are elected to serve on and it is a great honor to be a board member. Additionally, I would say that being a member of the NCBON sets you apart from other BONs and that you are looked upon as a leader. I would tell them to research the position that they are interested in and make sure that they fulfill the requirements. Lastly, I would tell them that it is a rewarding experience (personal communication, April 5, 2019).

As a public member who is appointed, Martha Ann Harrell provided the following advice for anyone seeking an appointment “I would tell them that their time, their experience and their learnings will be invaluable and irreplaceable. I underestimated the time I anticipated to spend working with board-related activities, however, I found that much of the time spent was driven by my own personal desire to learn and understand better the board’s role and how I could best be an asset to it. The colleagues I interact with through this board are truly some of the most talented, knowledgeable, and respected persons I have had the pleasure of working with in my professional career. Learning from those I was partnered and engaged with, in combination with the robust training and education provided to board members made my time and my efforts more than worth it. This is a very strong working board, and for anyone seeking an appointment to this board, they will greatly benefit from their experiences” (personal communication, April 7, 2019).

Frank DeMarco, NCBON Chair, provided the following advice to nurses considering seeking nomination to serve on the Board: “I would strongly encourage anyone that is interested in becoming a board member to do so. It is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly. At the same time, you will grow professionally. It provides one the opportunity to impact nursing practice in a unique way while obtaining a better understanding of nursing regulation and practice. It is an amazing experience that only enhances your practice as a nurse” (personal communication, April 5, 2019).

Questions?

Contact Chandra Graves at election@ncbon.com or visit our website at https://www.ncbon.com/election-general-information.

We hope to see you as a future nominee for a Board position!

Required Reflective Questions:

1. What is the mission of the NCBON?
2. Where are the candidate biographies located?
3. Why are the candidate biographies important in the election process?
4. Where is access to the Electronic Election located?
5. When does the Election take place?
6. What are the overall responsibilities for NCBON board members?
7. What is the composition of the NCBON board members?
8. What are the qualifications to be a NCBON board member?
9. How are public members appointed to the NCBON?
10. Locate and review the position statements and decision trees on the NCBON website

References


Seuss, Dr. (1990). Oh, the places you’ll go! New York: Random House
**EARN CE CREDIT**
“Your Voice, Your Vote: NCBON Election 2019” (1 CH)

**INSTRUCTIONS**
Read the article, online reference documents (if applicable), and reflect on the 10 questions listed under the “Required Reflective Questions” section of this article.

**RECEIVE CONTACT HOUR CERTIFICATE**
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 (Your Voice, Your Vote: NCBON Election 2019).
Registration deadline is 8-15-2019.

**PROVIDER ACCREDITATION**
The North Carolina Board of Nursing will award 1 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 “Your Voice, Your Vote: NCBON Election 2019.”
Participants must read the CE article, online reference documents (if applicable), and reflect on the 10 questions listed under the “Required Reflective Questions” section of this article in order to be awarded CNE contact hours. Verification of participation will be noted by online registration. Neither the author nor members of the planning committee have any conflicts of interest related to the content of this activity.

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**Gateway to Voting!**
“Every election is determined by the people who show up” - Larry J. Sabato, “Pendulum Swing”

It’s time to vote and the Board has opened your “Gateway” for easier access!

But wait! Before you vote, take the time to read the CE election article on page 6 to learn more about your Board and the importance of voting as well as review the Slate of Candidates on page 12 to learn more about your candidates.

Once you’re ready, it’s as simple as 1 – 2 – 3!

1. Log onto your Gateway account on the Board’s website at www.ncbon.com
2. Locate the election logo
3. Follow the instructions and cast your vote

It’s that simple! Voting is open from July 1st through August 15th! Exercise your right to vote today!

Questions? Contact the Board of Nursing at election@ncbon.com