

Government Affairs
May 2022
Jean Kaminski

HB 608

ONA BOD voted to support the American Cancer Society's request for biomarker testing legislation. This bill was introduced March 29, 2022 and would require health plans and Medicaid to cover biomarker testing.

Conviction of TN Nurse and need for change

The following statement is attributable to ONA President, Robert Weitzel, RN:
“The ONA stands with many Ohio nurses in deep concern about the dangerous precedent set with the criminal conviction of former Tennessee nurse, RaDonda Vaught. Ms. Vaught was convicted of criminally negligent homicide and impaired adult abuse on March 25 stemming from a 2017 medication error that resulted in a patient death.

Medical errors are the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States, resulting in more fatalities than motor vehicle accidents, breast cancer or AIDS. Given the alarming number of medical errors, we must begin to question why our healthcare systems are not better designed to ensure safer patient care. We must go beyond the individual healthcare workers, evaluate the entire body of evidence about why medical errors occur and take heed. We must do all that we can to protect patients and families from preventable errors.

For example, research has repeatedly pointed to an increase in medical errors and patient mortality when nurses are understaffed and work lengthy shifts. Yet, many medical systems continue to intentionally understaff nurses and mandate nurses to work extra hours as cost-saving measures, while federal and state legislatures stall common sense legislation to curb unsafe nurse staffing.

Already, over 40% of nurses are considering leaving the profession. Criminally punishing Ms. Vaught, who immediately reported and took ownership of her error, and who was already disciplined by the Tennessee Board of Nursing through licensure revocation, will only further demoralize the nursing profession, contribute to the nurse staffing crisis, and potentially dissuade healthcare professionals from being fully transparent about errors.

Decision makers must start trusting the most trusted profession. All signs point to a need for change, and the time is now for meaningful systemic change to happen.”

Ohio Nurses March - May 12, 2022

Nurses in Ohio met in Columbus for a March at the capitol today.

This March was to influence legislators and citizens of Ohio to create needed changes in healthcare and nursing in Ohio. There is hope the advocacy efforts affect members of Congress and state legislators, thus creating an atmosphere conducive to change. They are addressing “violence on the job, mental health and well-being, reimbursement and coverage of nursing services and many other work environment challenges impacting the nursing profession.” May their efforts bring about change that will assist the nursing profession and bring true health to the citizens of our state.