Internet Resources for State Government Relations

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State Government Affairs

Nurse anesthesia pros pers when CRNAs are actively informed about the political forces that are shaping the future of the profession. Thanks to the Internet, CRNAs do not have to passively wait for important information to come to them, as the task of searching for information is not as time-consuming and arduous as it once was. This article is updated and published regularly to provide CRNAs with websites intended as a first step for CRNAs who want to get involved in learning about the issues, individuals, and institutions that are determining how the profession of nurse anesthesia is regulated. Save some of the Internet sites noted in this column as bookmarks or favorites on your browser for quick access when you need them.

**State Legislation/Regulations**

State legislation and regulations, as well as information regarding state legislators, governors, and other state officers, are available on a number of different websites. The following sites are some of the quickest ways to access this information; Internet search engines (described later in this article) also can facilitate state (or federal) research.

**www.aana.com**
The AANA website contains a wide variety of information for the public, CRNA members, and CRNA state association leadership. Important updates regarding state legislative and regulatory matters are posted on the homepage and under “Advocacy.” To reach the State Government Affairs page, go to the members homepage (by clicking on the “My AANA” tab and signing in) then click on “State Issues” under the “Advocacy” tab. This page has links to the State Update (with current news about legislative and regulatory proposals that could affect CRNAs) and information on specific topics like state licensure compacts, supervision requirements, and office surgery rules. The “Government Affairs Manual for State Nurse Anesthetist Associations,” with excellent CRNA advocacy information, can be found here. The page also has a link to our “State Association Resources” page, which contains organizational and advocacy resources for state association leadership. State-by-state charts regarding state requirements for CRNAs, such as master’s degrees and new graduate practice requirements, are located on both the members and the public side of the website. To access them, look for the “State Legislative and Regulatory Requirements” link in the State Government Affairs section under the Advocacy tab.

**www.lawsource.com/also/**
American Law Sources On-line is a collection of links to online sources of both state and federal law. This site is an excellent starting point when searching for state laws or regulations. This site also includes links (when available) to court decisions and state attorney general opinions, as well as interstate compacts and model acts.

**www.ncsl.org**
The site of the National Conference of State Legislatures includes a wide variety of information regarding state legislatures, including a searchable legislation database containing the full text of every bill in all states and a state legislative websites directory. Go directly to http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures.aspx for information on state lawmakers, their staffs, elections, and other information. At http://www.ncsl.org/research/health.aspx, information on state healthcare reform measures has been gathered.

**www.followthemoney.org**
This National Institute on Money in State Politics website tracks campaign contributions to state gubernatorial, legislative, and judicial candidates, and includes databases that are searchable by candidate, contributor, lobbyist, or lobbyist client. A summary for each state is also available under “Search Our Data.” If you want to know who is contributing to a particular lawmaker, or where other organizations are placing their donations, this website is an excellent resource.

**multistate.com**
Multistate provides information about the political parties of all governors, as well as the partisan splits in each state’s House and Senate. It also gives state-by-state session calendars, which include bill introduction deadlines.

**Federal Legislation/Regulations**

Although this column is primarily intended to address state information, state laws and regulations occasionally reference federal laws and regulations that you may need to access.
The following are some sites with basic federal information.

**www.aana.com**

The AANA’s Federal Government Affairs (FGA) page contains important information relevant to CRNA practice. To access this page, sign on to the members side, then look under the Advocacy tab for “Federal Government Affairs.” The FGA page has reimbursement information, the Federal Political Directors’ Manual, and the Hotline News, with up-to-date information regarding developments in Washington that could affect how CRNAs perform their jobs.

**congress.gov**

This website is intended to replace the old Library of Congress thomas.loc.gov site. The page has information concerning federal legislation, including bill text and status, and U.S. House and Senate committee reports and schedules. The site also has biographical information for all members of the federal congress.

**Association/Organization Sites**

The following websites include a variety of helpful information.

**www.asahq.org**

The American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) website includes the ASAs monthly newsletter, the ASAs standards and guidelines, and other information.

**nursingworld.org/**

The American Nurses Association (ANA) site includes a wide variety of nursing information, including nursing periodicals and publications. The ANA’s state and federal government affairs information can be found at http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/Policy-Advocacy.

**www.ama-assn.org**

The American Medical Association (AMA) site includes medical information for both patients and professionals. The site also includes a feature called “Doctor Finder.”

This database can be searched by physician name or specialty and includes both AMA members and nonmembers. The Doctor Finder profiles usually include information concerning a physician’s educational background, board certifications, and practice locations. The AMA Wire link provides users with information about current AMA activities.

**www.ncsbn.org**

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing is the membership organization for state boards of nursing. Links on the homepage take you to contact information and websites for state boards of nursing and information regarding the RN/LPN and APRN interstate licensure compacts.

**Other Useful Resources**

**Search Engines**

A lengthy discussion of Internet search engines is beyond the scope of this column, but we encourage you to experiment with various online search engines to facilitate your research. Some of the most noteworthy search engines include www.google.com; www.ask.com; www.bing.com; and www.yahoo.com. So-called “meta-search” engines (such as www.dogpile.com) search multiple search engines simultaneously. While such search engines are sometimes useful, they do not work as well as individual search engines for in-depth research. If you are privacy-oriented, search engines like https://duckduckgo.com/ perform searches without sending your IP address and terms you searched for to the sites you visit.

**Article Resources**

Often the best and most useful sources for tracking and identifying state health policy trends and events are local media. Sifting through hundreds of local papers and websites for relevant news would be a difficult chore, though. Fortunately, there is a number of websites that regularly collect and update information and news stories relating to state government and health policy activities. These include: http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Topics/States.aspx http://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline/headlines?issues=328135 http://www.governing.com/topics/health-human-services

**Case Law**

Researching case law can be tricky even for trained attorneys with access to specialized fee-based legal research services such as Lexis and Westlaw; for the CRNA it can be nearly impossible. In a pinch, one resource that can be helpful is Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/) which has a button that allows users to search case law.