**AWHONN PA Section Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes**

July 26, 2023, 6:00PM – Virtual via Zoom

**Attendance:** Ellen Taylor, Nicole Rodi, Gerri Maurer – meeting date was changed from 3rd Wednesday to 4th Wednesday for this meeting (but perhaps permanently)

**Agenda items:**

Meeting minutes from May reviewed and approved.

Legislative Handbook update – Seth has the list of PA Section committee members names and addresses. Will be mailing handbooks out but, in the meantime, the link to the web address was given in the agenda. Online version <https://i7g4f9j6.stackpathcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/25143952/2020-AWHONN-Legislative-Handbook-FINAL-2-4-20.pdf>.

Two new members have joined the committee –

Paula Hayden-Vasquez, rising senior student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. Paula comes with experience as a legislative intern in Senator Ben Cardin’s office, senator from Maryland. Paula interned last summer and was on Senator Cardin’s health services committee. She said it was very interesting since it was during all the activity around the Supreme Court decision on Roe vs Wade.

We also welcome Jamilah Patton, L&D nurse from the Philadelphia area. I have not had contact with Jamilah yet, but she has expressed interest in joining the committee. Updates next month.

Updates from Seth Chase, Director of Government Affairs AWHONN –

Please see the notes at the end of these minutes. The Bill numbers are listed. Please send information to your representatives and senators for their support. Send an email and if your schedule allows, please visit your reps and senators in their home offices while they take a vacation break from mid-August to Labor Day. Visits are always more powerful than emails, but we’re all busy and if you only have time for an email, please do that!

I attached a copy and sent a copy of the AWHONN notes for support attached to the early email I sent out with info from the Conference and about the activity of this committee. If you can’t locate it, please let me know. Alanna will send it to you.

Updates from the Public Policy Committee (PPC) – Ellen Taylor is a member of the AWHONN national Public Policy Committee. The PPC meets every month to discuss legislative activities to update the group and decide AWHONN forward activity.

Ellen reported AWHONN has been approached by Association of Certified Nurse Midwives (ACNM) about joining efforts with AWHONN on the Hill Day activity. The ACNM group is not as large, and they feel they have something to add to our organization but have difficulty getting appointments with their smaller numbers. AWHONN is very organized in their approach to scheduling and preparing for the Day on the Hill. Not sure of the outcome on this yet, but it is under consideration.

Ellen also updated us on the activity for the Bills, and Acts we are following Workforce Violence Bill, Perinatal Workforce Act, and the MOMMAS Act. PPC is considering revising their agenda for 2024 (119th Congress). Please see Seth’s updates at the end of the meeting minutes.

AWHONN national PPC meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month –

We have scheduled our committee to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month – which is the day before the PPC meets monthly. Ellen can update us with more current activity if we meet after the PPC committee. If we keep our meeting scheduled on the evening before they have their monthly meeting, the information we get will always be one month behind. But if we changed our regular meeting date to the 4th Wednesday from the 3rd, then we would be getting current information from the PPC via Ellen. **I recommend that we move our meetings to the 4th Wednesday of the month so we can get the PPC updates within a week of their meeting.** I open this to discussion. Please email if this has rigorous negative implications to any member of the group within the next two weeks. Please send your thoughts and feedback. If there are no grievous objections, we will plan to change the date starting in August to the 4th Wednesday of each month. I will email all members about this potential change before the next meeting.

One more thing from the PPC, I knew this was a popular idea when I spoke to Debbie Ketchum (Board Rep on the PPC) in May. The PPC likes the idea of forming a Legislative Committee at the Section level instead of one Legislative Chair/coordinator responding for each section, just as we have done in PA. Some other sections have done this also. It facilitates more active members being informed and involved, and therefore more AWHONN members leading with healthcare policy changes. The PPC plans to promote this and encourage other sections to do the same. WE are trendsetters!!!!

Pennsylvania State legislation activity -

Gerri is a member of PCNP/NPASP Board (Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners) and is on their legislative committee. Once a month they review all activity related to healthcare in the state of PA. Gerri can develop a list for us to review each meeting, and we will begin that at the August meeting. There is a lot of legislative activity in PA. They follow nearly 50 acts/bills/items in committees, etc. monthly.

Letter of Support for MidAtlantic Milk Bank –

Gerri was contacted asking for AWHONN to provide a letter of support for MAMB. They are trying to get insurance and Medicaid coverage for donors’ milk. AHWONN reviewed the information, and we are drafting a letter – thanks to our two interns! We will send our letter on to Seth Chase (Director of Govt affairs at AHWONN) and with his approval, we will send on to the MAMB. Please look at the position statement for donors milk

On that topic, Gerri is scheduling a meeting with Representative Summer Lee for her support at the federal level and to discuss the 3 issues AWHONN is following. Denise O’Connor – Exec Director of MAMB – has requested to go with Gerri to meet Rep Lee. Also, Paula Hayden-Vazquez - will join them.

Rep Chrissy Houlihan has also shown interest in the MAMB donor milk issue. If we get this to a federal level, our hope is they may work together to get this done. The MidAtlantic organization covers a multi-state group, not only PA.

Look for our legislative news corner in the Newsletter. We will also be posting our meeting minutes on the PA section AWHONN webpage.

I will send an email to let you know whether our meetings will remain on the 3rd Wednesday or change to the 4th Wednesday of the month.

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Gerri Maurer

**The Updates: from Seth Chase – June 15, 2023**

**AWHONN on Capitol Hill**

On April 25, 75 AWHONN members met with staff for 87 members of Congress to advocate for three bills: the Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA’s) Act, H.R. 3523/S. 1710—the Perinatal Workforce Act, and H.R. 2663/S. 1176—the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act.

You can add your voice to encourage your US representative and senators to cosponsor the H.R. 2663/S. 1176—the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act using [AWHONN’s alert](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.votervoice.net%2FAWHONN%2FCampaigns%2F96051%2FRespond&data=05%7C01%7Cgerri.maurer%40pitt.edu%7C0aa569776b4e4f03a71208db896044da%7C9ef9f489e0a04eeb87cc3a526112fd0d%7C1%7C0%7C638254818794631861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nlrY%2FcwpO7T8CeV2eZwBjTfU6seVE0MvyzXvnhI2JHU%3D&reserved=0) to call your members of Congress.

**Debt Limit**

Since the passage of the Second Liberty Bond Act in 1917, U.S. law has limited how much debt the Treasury can incur. On January 19, the country hit the debt limit. Treasury began postponing certain investments to make money available to pay the government’s bills until Congress raised the limit. The reluctance of the Republican Party majority under the leadership of Speaker Kevin McCarthy to pass a debt limit increase without gaining some cuts to federal spending delayed passing an increase. President Joe Biden and McCarthy negotiated an agreement to raise the limit and worked to ensure enough support in Congress. That agreement resulted in [H.R. 3746—the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.votervoice.net%2FBroadcastLinks%2Fe-0d6_fy_DfNCFNP7SF4aA&data=05%7C01%7Cgerri.maurer%40pitt.edu%7C0aa569776b4e4f03a71208db896044da%7C9ef9f489e0a04eeb87cc3a526112fd0d%7C1%7C0%7C638254818794631861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=M82ZNu%2BXIql0n1aYktkjvb3JctcFkbg17rgaFJ94wHY%3D&reserved=0), which the House passed on May 31 by [a vote of 314 – 117](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.votervoice.net%2FBroadcastLinks%2FKBR3m1avfpo42JRllpfm-A&data=05%7C01%7Cgerri.maurer%40pitt.edu%7C0aa569776b4e4f03a71208db896044da%7C9ef9f489e0a04eeb87cc3a526112fd0d%7C1%7C0%7C638254818794631861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=vD118batzDNMaqkC4J1MfkNmaBgA1dGYHtlKNu%2FKlaY%3D&reserved=0). Both the votes for and against were bipartisan. The following day the Senate passed the bill by [63 – 36](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.votervoice.net%2FBroadcastLinks%2F4y1S2--c8Ef7eX0BgfYBjA&data=05%7C01%7Cgerri.maurer%40pitt.edu%7C0aa569776b4e4f03a71208db896044da%7C9ef9f489e0a04eeb87cc3a526112fd0d%7C1%7C0%7C638254818794631861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=h8Us7equwzifQn2%2Fcx9h%2FuMao7o%2Fes0tgZhGmjMzAmk%3D&reserved=0) in a vote that, like the House, was bipartisan in both votes for and against. President Biden signed the bill into law on June 3.

The bill suspends the debt limit until January 1, 2025, and then increases it on January 2. It establishes new discretionary spending limits for fiscal years 2024 and 2025, appropriates funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs Cost of War Toxic Exposure Fund, rescinds unspent COVID-19 funds, and reduces IRS funding. It expands work requirements for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, modifies environmental review processes, and terminates the suspension of Federal student loan payments.

Hitting the debt limit without raising or suspending it would eventually prevent the Federal government from paying its bills and would prevent the operation of federal programs that AWHONN supports.

**HHS has Released STI Plan**

The Biden Administration Department of Health and Human Services on June 8 released a plan to reduce sexually transmitted infections. Rates of the most common sexually transmitted infections have reached record highs. The [plan](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.votervoice.net%2FBroadcastLinks%2FcRYxI_sFN7PvnHDmDFCtow&data=05%7C01%7Cgerri.maurer%40pitt.edu%7C0aa569776b4e4f03a71208db896044da%7C9ef9f489e0a04eeb87cc3a526112fd0d%7C1%7C0%7C638254818794631861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=d%2B3l%2BQlYSHMBSz3SWq5CMirCOzxQUXJdDAZsfDxXUcc%3D&reserved=0) can be viewed on the HHS website.