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***Past Event: 2024 NCSBN Leadership and Public Policy Conference - The Path to the Globe Video Transcript***

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**Event**

2024 NCSBN Leadership and Public Policy Conference

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**Presenter**

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So I thought about how to shape this next presentation. It's only 20 minutes. And how was I going to connect it to Jefferson? And I think what I learned yesterday a little bit from David is that Jefferson wasn't a great orator. He was a great writer.

He had a lot of great quotes, as Shan mentioned, but not a great orator. And so I think that what I could have done is I could have written this all out and just handed it out to you and taken a break, found a Starbucks, which I'm in desperate need of. Because it turns out, and I was reading this morning that for his first annual message to Congress on December 8th, 1801, Jefferson chose not to deliver it in person.

Instead, he sent it by written message by his secretary, Meriwether Lewis. And he continued this practice throughout his presidency. He never appeared before Congress to deliver his annual message. That actually continued until Woodrow Wilson.

So Presidents were delivering their message by writing it and sending it to Congress. And many speculated that Jefferson's aversion was because he didn't like to speak in public, although Jefferson himself stated that he did it for the convenience of Congress. So kind.

So I'm going to share with you this morning a case study about gathering data and then utilizing data in public policy and advocacy efforts. And I'm going to talk about, I think to connect it again, to Jefferson, really about how to communicate, is to make sure that you plan, and that when you see something happen, it's because a lot went into it beforehand.

So I'm going to use a case study. It's called "The Path to The Globe." It'll make a lot of sense, hopefully, in a moment. But for those of you who I had not had the pleasure to meet, I am Nicole Livanos, and I'm the director of state affairs at NCSBN. I lead our three state-level legislative campaigns working with Tom.

And one of the campaigns that we work on is the Nurse Licensure Compact. And that's what I'm going to focus on today. So for those in the audience that may not be as familiar with the Nurse Licensure Compact, it's an interstate healthcare licensure compact for RNs and LPNs, and allows a nurse to hold one license and practice across state lines, both in person, electronically, telephonically, with that one license.

And in order for a state to join the compact, they have to do so legislatively. So welcome to my world now where we lead advocacy efforts working with stakeholders, working with boards of nursing in order to prepare for legislative campaigns that start typically in January, the actual legislative on the groundwork, but we are preparing for now in the fall.

So in order, as I mentioned, for a jurisdiction to join the NLC, of course, it must be enacted legislatively. And one of the ways in which we prepare for that endeavor that starts and kicks off in January is using a variety of tools such as an NLC survey. So what the survey allows us to do in partnership with NCSBN's research team is to gather interests, so the need and the support among licensees, among RNs, and LPNs for the Nurse Licensure Compact.

Do nurses want the compact in their jurisdiction? If you know they do, that's helpful in order for you to talk to lawmakers whose constituents are nurses. So in partnership with NCSBN's research team, we develop a survey. We, you know, set up a timeline that makes sense and it's strategic to the issue, and also then distribute the survey.

Oftentimes these surveys are done jointly in conjunction with the Board of Nursing and NCSBN partnering. Sometimes the Board of Nursing wants to do it alone. They want to send out the survey and distribute that survey, or sometimes NCSBN does it alone. The goal of the survey, as I mentioned, is to gauge the need and interest of the NLC among licensees.

The surveys are very short. That's why people fill them out. They're, on average, seven questions. And we gather demographic information to gauge the characteristics of the respondents. Are they active in their nursing practice? What practice area of nursing are they involved in? We also inquire about union membership.

Most of you here are familiar with why we do that. The historic opposition to the Nurse Licensure Compact are nursing unions. And so what's really important for us and for lawmakers is to know how union nurses feel about the Nurse Licensure Compact.

Do they see a need for it? Would they utilize it? And do they support it? That is critical to gauge. So we do ask that question as well. We also then ask the need questions. How many active licenses do you hold?

Would you benefit immediately from this because you are currently obtaining and maintaining multiple licenses? We also ask them whether or not they have practiced across state lines, either providing patient care or nursing educational services in the last 24 months. Would a multi-state license have utility for you because you are already practicing across state lines?

Now sometimes the questions don't add up in the percentages. A lot of people are practicing across state lines but reporting that they don't hold more than one license. So there's that, right? And that's another thing that the compact can help to solve. And for patient safety reasons, we really need those individuals as they practice across state lines to be authorized and licensed to do so.

We then ask the support and opposition question. So we want to gauge, do you support it? Do you oppose it? Do you have no opinion on it? Right? We don't want you to pick a side if you don't have a side on the issue. We want to know that, where are there educational opportunities to turn the no opinions into supporters, hopefully, that way.

So we also ask those questions as well. So in 2023, NCSBN conducted an NLC survey in Massachusetts, a state where we have been engaged in on the ground with our Nurse Licensure Compact campaign since 2016 to advocate for NLC adoption. The survey launched in October of 2023.

It was in the field for about a month with, you know, very, you know, regular reminder emails to fill out the online survey. It's online, which is very convenient for many. And then just ahead of the New Year, we had a report in hand detailing some very compelling results. But before we get into the results, I want to tell you what happened during that period, so the pre-survey results timeline.

We didn't just twiddle our thumbs while the survey was out there in the field. We started a robust communications plan for what we were going to do when we got the results. And we also knew that we needed to educate lawmakers that there was a survey out there and exactly what data or what questions were going to be asked so that we would be able to present them with data. So in November 2023, the NLC was scheduled for a committee hearing, which was really great timing.

I wish I could say that I planned that, but we didn't. We had a hearing on the NLC before the Joint Healthcare Finance Committee. And so you can see there Robert Krebs. Many of you probably remember him and I. We made it into the newspaper, woo, as we testified in support of the Nurse Licensure Compact. And at that time, we testified with several panels of supporters, and only one panel of opposition, which were the unions.

And they testified virtually. So in the room, we had very strong support and it was an excellent hearing. While we were in Boston, we made sure that we met with lawmakers, and that included the Senate president's healthcare advisor. And our goal of that meeting was to talk about the survey. At that point, we actually had a sneak peek. Maryann Alexander leads the research team, and they were able to provide us that morning with what the results were so far of the survey.

And we were able to then share that with the Senate president's healthcare advisor and be able to offer the latest and greatest data that was coming in. So we let them know exactly what was going to happen and asked them, of course, what their plan was for the data as well. And so they wanted us to work hand-in-hand with them as the data came out, not to release it all at once, not to make it live and, you know, send it around, but really to think strategically about who should see it first and how we should communicate it with the media, with, you know, grassroots efforts and the like.

So in December of 2023, again waiting for that final report to be drafted, we held a media strategy call. My department as well as NCSBN's marketing department and our lobbyists all came together to make sure that any communications plan was streamlined so that it followed the needs of the legislative effort.

Our marketing team is probably super frustrated with me sometimes because they can do really great things, but sometimes we don't need those really great things for our legislative effort. We sometimes need to...

It's frustrating, but we need to wait in order to put ads out to gain grassroots support because lawmakers may be on break, they may be focused on budget, they don't need a bunch of emails coming at them

about supporting the NLC. So we wanted to work hand-in-hand and coordinate this effort across NCSBN. And also worked with Reputation Partners.

And Reputation Partners is a communications firm, a PR firm that NCSBN works with, who has excellent media contacts across the country. And we wanted our lobbyists to work with them and tell them which reporters would be friendly to hearing about the results, the survey results, most likely to publish those results. And so we were able to coordinate that and then get ready for when it was necessary and when it made sense legislatively.

Certainly, in December, nothing makes sense. Everyone's focused on the holidays. And so we knew that we were going to wait. So what were the results? So the results were over 17,000 nurses completed the survey. Eighty-one percent were RNs, so majority of RNs. Twenty-one percent, so over a fifth, of respondents were union nurses.

That was a really great stat for the survey and to be able to bring to lawmakers those need results. Over 50% of respondents reported providing nursing services or communicating with patients, providing nursing education services across state lines or outside of Massachusetts in the last 2 years. This was 2023.

So we are covering part of the pandemic and a little bit of the post-pandemic world. Fifty-one percent of respondents hold an active nursing license in at least one additional jurisdiction. So the need is there, the want is there as well. Ninety percent of respondents were in favor of joining the NLC, 2% opposed, 7% expressed no opinion. That's where I know I have work to do to educate and advocate for all nurses so they understand what the compact is.

And then we could break down, or our research team rather, I can't do any of this, the research team rather could break down results into subgroups, which was super helpful. So 87% of respondents that had a primary state of residence of Massachusetts supported it, 88% of union members supported the compact, and 96% of respondents holding more than 1 active license supported it.

So we had really great results we knew now to run on. So our communications plan was robust. This is a tiny screenshot of a very large Excel document. And I really just wanted to highlight how strategic we were here. We prioritized people, which before screenshotting this, I made sure the Board of Nursing was a one.

And of course, they were. So for us to provide the results to them, to provide the results to the Health Policy Commission, a well-respected group in Massachusetts that is non-partisan and works to dive into healthcare issues, health and human services, and then key lawmakers that we were going to focus on communicating with them the results first before this ever hit anybody's inbox.

So we set up meetings with all of these individuals. Some we did, some our lobbyists did solo. But we were able to communicate to all of these individuals again before anything went even remotely public or to the media. So this is how we prioritized it.

You got a one through four. We established a timeline for doing so, and then we created resources in partnership with NCSBN Marketing. We created a snapshot, right? We have a report, it's long. We wanted to cut it down. Lawmakers want one piece of paper in their hand, if even. Actually, they want it in their inbox now.

And so we created this survey snapshot. It just has the highlights. Marketing developed ads that were of all shapes and sizes and could be put on social media, could be put on the internet, on news sites, etc., highlighting that 90% number. And then we created a state-specific grassroots page where Massachusetts nurses or members of the public or whomever, any grassroots supporters could go to [nursecompact.com/ma](http://nursecompact.com/ma).

It was a site that we could put state-specific info into. It didn't look national in nature. And they were able to send a tailored to Massachusetts grassroots letter to their lawmakers, again once we hit play on all of that part of the plan. So January through March, we had our communications plan in action.

I mentioned that we were meeting one-on-one with individuals. We actually were able to do formal presentations of the findings. The Senate president sat for a presentation as we walked through the entire survey report. Again, they were very interested in knowing the information, especially if she was going to ask her members to take a vote that they knew they were going to get a lot of heat on from the unions.

So it was very important they understood how the survey was conducted, that it was legitimate, that the numbers were high enough, that the response rate was strong. And we were able to assure them of that by taking the time and making a plan to do this. And then Reputation Partners did their thing.

They met and prepped stakeholders. We had a lot of nurses in Massachusetts from ANA Massachusetts, who is a strong partner, on the NLC. We had them prepped by Reputation Partners. Not everybody is comfortable talking in front of the media, like Jefferson. And so we, you know, wanted them to be able to be comfortable with talking about the NLC.

We fielded questions from reporters. You know, we had gotten coverage when we testified at the hearing. And so we, of course, went back to that reporter because everyone loves a quick follow-up. She already knows about the issue. So we reached back out to her as well and said, "Hey, we've got these results. We are only sharing a small number right now with reporters and with lawmakers, and we're going to, you know, educate you, but ask you to hold until the timing is right."

The timing being right, meaning when the Senate president's office said it was. So that's how we got to The Globe. There was an editorial article in "The Boston Globe" titled, "Massachusetts Needs More Nurses and Should Ease Path for Out-of-State Workers." We landed this editorial piece in March 20th of 2024, which was a very strategic time within the legislative process.

The Massachusetts legislature ended session at the end of July, and so we knew that we had a short time period for any action to take place, and we were ready. And all the members were ready for there to be this public coverage of the survey results and public push for the NLC in Massachusetts this year.

The survey made its debut in "The Boston Globe." So there was coverage of the actual survey results, and they utilized that in order to show that nursing supported it. But of course, you have to prepare because any journalist who's using journalistic standards is going to cover both sides.

They're going to look for who the opposition is, ask for a quote, that's going to happen, whether it's an article or an editorial, probably not an opinion piece. I don't think anyone's reaching out to find other opinions there. But whether it's an editorial board working on a article or just a news article, they're going to look for that other side.

So you need to anticipate the opposition here. You need to prepare lawmakers, you need to prepare advocates. You need to prepare readers, right? "The Boston Globe" has that responsibility, but so do we. We need to make sure that people understand what the counterarguments are going to be so that the lawmakers are prepped to calm their colleagues who are getting really anxious about voting on the NLC. So in the article, we had a quote from the Massachusetts Nursing Association, the union.

"Murphy worries that entering the compact will compromise patient safety if it results in a more temporary, out-of-state nurses or more reliance on out-of-state nurses to remotely monitor patients." The Editorial Board, earlier, before that quote appeared, said, "Patient care is.." sorry, in response to that quote said, "Patient care is compromised now when patients can't find staff, and if the union is worried about nurses being overworked, it should support a measure that would help employers fill vacancies."

So they had a direct counterpoint, covered the opposition, but had a direct counterpoint. It's important for all of us to do and also for a good journalist to do as well. Don't panic. The media doesn't always get it right. Your communications plan isn't always going to go right. Make sure you stay agile and willing to adjust.

The initial publication had the quote on the left. They talked about how you would have to follow continuing education requirements in each jurisdiction. We know that that's not the case, but because we had worked with Reputation Partners and this author, and the author we were working with at "The Boston Globe" who was writing on behalf of the Editorial Board, we were able to, I want to say within an hour, have a correction made to this because we knew that the unions would jump on this and say this isn't true.

And we also learned from the author that this idea and why she wrote it here came from one of the interviews with ANA Massachusetts. So we also knew that we needed to touch base back with that contact and make them aware that in some states like Washington, they have gotten clever about allowing or mandating CEEs through employment in the state, but not because you held a license, a multi-state license.

So there's a nuance there, which I think the reporter was able to capture here in her corrected response. So after The Globe article, we had a mass distribution of the survey. That was our go-live. As soon as we got, you know, a great media article out there, we wanted to go live right away with the surveys.

And so we followed up with key advocates and media contacts and worked hand-in-hand with the Senate president. And she developed an advocacy strategy for bill movement. She identified the economic development package in Massachusetts as a vehicle. That was always considered a must-pass. It had a lot of goodies in it for lawmakers. And they were not going to have to vote no or yes for the NLC.

They were just going to have to vote yes for a package. And that really helps, especially as lawmakers are facing an election year. The Globe also really set the stage for this to be an economic development issue, and so did other reporters' coverage as well. They talked about the amount of money that were being spent on temporary contracts and the NLC providing a way to get more permanent positions filled and staff shortages tied to bed closures and psych and SUD units having an economic impact on the health of the population, as well as in a lot of these facilities as well.

And a sponsor was identified. It was carried by the Senate Healthcare Finance Chair, Cindy Friedman. And so that was an incredibly strong sponsor to have. And the amendment did make it into the bill, and

the package moved into a conference committee between the House and Senate. But that brings us up to today. And part of the communications plan that we did not work on was that the Massachusetts legislature did nothing this session.

They failed to pass any significant legislation before they ended on July 31st. These were some of the headlines around Massachusetts adjourning for the year. But Massachusetts did importantly pass a circus animal bill. And so I furiously texting our lobbyists through past midnight.

They went till 6 a.m. so I was right up there with them monitoring the economic development bill. We came up with a lot better headlines such as "The Circus Leaves Town," "Sideshow," "Clowns," all of that, "Lions and Tigers," and nothing got done. And so these were...this is the reality, right?

You plan for this, you do all of this work, and here we are with Massachusetts having not passed the economic development package, which was the must-passed. So this is just hopefully a case study that you can bring back to your jurisdictions. Think about more strategically. When you have all that data coming to you, when there are those reports that are done and funded, how can those reports...how can you hold back for a moment those results and think about the most strategic way to put them forward?

So I hope that this was helpful, and thank you so much. We have a break until... Oh, my gosh. I'm sorry. I went over. We have a break until 10:30. But it's okay.

10:35 we'll start our next session. Thank you.