

This April I had the pleasure of attending the Mid Year Assembly (MYA) of Nurse Anesthetists in Washington, DC. Having experienced several Annual meetings, I already had a lot of respect for all the time, effort and resources that go into making the AANA, and these kind of events, tick. Being at MYA only enhanced that respect. What a great experience to meet the "movers & shakers" of our organization.

The conference started Sunday, April 19th with a day of education and updating regarding issues most pressing on the AANA agenda. These included emphasizing safety and cost efficacy profiles of CRNAs and how that's so important in an environment which calls for high quality care while trying to keep costs down. Also, generating support for additional funding for CRNA, APRN and RN workforce development (education and research funding) as well as encouraging equality in CMS teaching rules. We discussed the need for support for HR 756, the *National Pain Care Policy Act*. After a thorough debriefing, we role played how we might present our arguments to legislators or their representatives to get comfortable with our topics. Sunday afternoon a state president/state GRC chair forum was held. Many states presented their approaches to national nurse anesthetist week activities and how they maintain good working relationships with state legislators.

Monday we listened to position statements from each of the 2009 candidates for the Board of Directors, followed by several committee reports and regional breakouts. At the end of the afternoon we met to discuss our game plan for the following days meetings "on the hill" and covered the topics for lobbying in greater depth. The day ended with several nice receptions for board candidates (lots of good food and wine!) and then I was invited out for a great meal at an Italian restaurant in Georgetown with a few NEANA folks, including several students - so much fun!!

Tuesday morning we heard from Senator Jeanne Shaheen, D-NH, the 2009 AANA Healthcare Leadership Award Winner as she discussed federal healthcare issues and her role in obtaining New Hampshire's CMS opt out status. She was very well received. We then headed out, along with our lobbyist Virginia Renfrew, to meet with Rep. Peter Welch's health aid, Stephanie. She was new to the office and unfamiliar with CRNA practice so we did some education and discussed our issues which she seemed receptive of. We finished the morning with lunch at the new AANA office in downtown Washington, DC. The office is beautiful and served as a nice place to recuperate from our days walk around the capitol.

Wednesday morning we headed back the capitol to meet at Senator Patrick Leahy's office for "Green Mountain Coffee Hour." Along with a group of other Vermonters, we were treated to coffee and breakfast followed by a brief address from Sen. Leahy and then a professional photo with the senator. Mark and I then met for almost an hour with Senator Leahy's Health Aid, Kathryn. She was more than interested in hearing what we had to say, asked many pertinent questions and is, in my opinion, an excellent resource for VANA. Then we headed over to Senator Sanders office for our final visit.

We lobbied our issues with Gail, Senator Sanders new health aid. Senator Sanders was unavailable for our meeting.

In closing, this was an amazing experience for me. I enjoyed representing Vermont CRNAs to our legislators and feel like Mark and I did a good job of it. This was not only a learning experience, but a growing experience in which I personally gained confidence in my working knowledge of CRNA issues, the inner workings of our national organization and my ability to communicate and interact with legislative officials and my peers.

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