

Commission or Association?

What's the difference between the **Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission** and the **Washington State Nurses Association**?

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) and WSNA are two organizations that play a critical role for the career of every nurse in Washington state. Although these organizations frequently share common agendas and agree on similar policy issues, the role and function of each organization is very different. Frequently, there is a great deal of confusion about the differences between the two organizations, and nurses contact one organization when they really need to make contact with the other. This document is intended to assist Washington state nurses by providing some clarifying information about each organization.

	Commission (NCQAC)	Association (WSNA)
Contact information	<p>Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission</p> <p>Phone: 360.236.4700 Fax: 360.236.4738</p> <p>Web: www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/professions/nursing</p>	<p>Washington State Nurses Association</p> <p>Phone: 206.575.7979 Fax: 206.575.1908</p> <p>Web: www.wsna.org</p>
Structure	Legally constituted State of Washington regulatory agency within the Department of Health	Professional association for all registered nurses; a constituent member of the American Nurses Association
Mission	<p>Section 18.79.010 of the Revised Code of Washington Revised Code of Washington describes the purpose of NCQAC as: to regulate the competency and quality of professional health care providers under its jurisdiction by establishing, monitoring and enforcing qualifications for licensing, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms and discipline. Rules, policies and procedures developed by the commission must promote the delivery of quality health care to the residents of the state of Washington.</p>	<p>WSNA's mission statement: The Washington State Nurses Association provides leadership for registered nurses and the nursing profession and promotes quality health care for consumers through education, advocacy and influencing state health care policy in the state of Washington.</p> <p>WSNA's vision statement: The Washington State Nurses Association is the collective and leading voice, authority and advocate for the nursing profession in the state of Washington. (Reviewed and approved 03/07)</p>
Leadership	Members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor to terms of up to four years. Membership consists of fifteen members including seven RNs, two ARNPs, three LPNs and three public members.	Members of the Board are elected by current members of WSNA through a democratic voting process.
Membership	Mandatory licensure to practice as an RN, LPN or ARNP (original education, examination, renewals, and endorsements).	Voluntary membership through application and dues; mandatory membership through various collective bargaining contract agreements.

	Commission (NCQAC)	Association (WSNA)
Role	Protects the public health, safety and welfare from unqualified or unsafe practitioners.	Informs nurses in Washington state about issues and trends that affect their professional practice. Promotes the professional development and advances the economic and general welfare of all nurses.
Policy	Adopts rules and regulations to implement its functions; issues interpretations on practice related issues as relevant to statute, rules and regulations.	Adopts position statements and resolutions that advance the profession and the organization's mission.
Practice standards	Establishes minimum standards for nursing education and practice.	Promotes ANA standards of nursing practice; works to ensure adherence to ANA's "Code of Ethics for Nurses."
Education	Develops reasonable and uniform standards for nursing practice and education. Approves and renews approval for nursing education programs that meet the Washington Administrative Code requirements.	Develops, promotes and approves continuing nursing education as authorized by the American Nurses Credentialing Center.
Workforce advocacy	Investigates complaints regarding nurses; issues discipline and monitors disciplinary actions (discipline may include stipulations, revocations, suspensions, denial of license or limitations on scope of nursing or nursing related practice activities.)	Promotes occupational safety for nurses. Provides workforce advocacy program for nurses including addressing workplace issues, e.g., staffing, safe lifting, hazardous exposure, work-place violence.
Government affairs	Administers the Nurse Practice Act and adopts rules and regulations for its implementation.	Acts and speaks for nursing profession related to legislation, governmental programs and health policy. Reviews all bills introduced in the Washington State Legislature for impact on nurses, nursing and the health care of the public.
Revenue	Establishes and collects licensure fees pursuant to legislative rules.	Membership dues established by members. Percentage may go to ANA.

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