The Importance of Joining a Professional Nurses Association

While it’s easy to join, the real benefit comes from active involvement. There are many levels of involvement: hosting a meeting, volunteering for a committee or task force, reviewing abstracts for a conference, and conference planning. Let’s take a look at some of the advantages of joining a professional nurses organization.

- **Education**: Science and technology change rapidly—and you need to keep up with the changes that affect health care. Like state licensing boards, many specialty certification boards require you to take continuing education (CE) courses to stay up-to-date in your practice. Some associations even offer CE activities to members at reduced prices.

- **Annual Conventions**: As a member of a professional organization, you’ll get notices announcing major conventions that you may be able to attend at a discount rate. Making professional contacts is a big draw at these conventions, where you’ll meet other nurses in your specialty.

- **Networking**: As a member of a professional association, you’ll have plenty of networking opportunities besides connecting with other health care professionals at national, state, or local conventions. For example, you will probably have access to online chats or forums at your associations’ Web site. Not only can you network with your peers and other professionals, but you can also hear how others are handling some of the same issues you face.

- **Safeguarding Your Profession**: You are part of a unified voice. Being aware and empowered to move your profession forward, to limit barriers to practice, and decrease the impact of uninformed legislators and other parties. To fully embrace your profession.

- **Certification**: Many professional organizations offer certification. Becoming certified demonstrates your commitment to excellence in your practice.

- **Targeted Products and Resources**: When you join a professional organization, you may get discounts to obtain online CE, newsletters, certification review materials, and much more. Some nursing organizations offer members discounts on auto, life, and professional liability insurance and feature special credit card offers. Many nursing organizations offer members an official journal that may contain peer-reviewed, clinical articles and research relevant to the specialty.

- **Career Advancement**: Participating in an association is the first step towards advancing your career. Employers often look for participation in professional organizations.

- **Career Assistance**: When you’re searching for a new job, look to your association’s career center for openings, advice, and opportunities. In fact, keep an eye on that information periodically, whether you’re job searching or not, to stay in touch with the latest trends in your specialty. Review job openings for salaries and benefits so you know current earning potentials. Also, networking assists in word of mouth job openings.

- **Web Sites**: Practically all nursing associations have Web sites you can explore. Typically, they offer general information about the association that anyone can access, as well as member-only areas with restricted access. The members-only section generally contains a wealth of resources.

For a list of some of the professional nurses associations: [http://nursing.illinois.gov/nursingspeciality.asp](http://nursing.illinois.gov/nursingspeciality.asp)