

## **STATEMENT CONCERNING THE RIGHTS OF PROFESSIONAL NURSES IN RELATION TO ETHICAL OR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

The Massachusetts Nurses Association, while believing that providing competent nursing care is the major responsibility of the nursing profession, recognizes that the individual nurse has the fundamental right to hold, certain ethical or religious beliefs and to expect that the right will be honored.

1. Unless the patient's life is in jeopardy, professional nurses shall not be required to participate in therapeutic abortions, tubal ligations, vasectomies or any other practices which may be in conflict with their ethical or religious beliefs.
2. When nurses have made clear in writing to their employer their ethical or religious objection to participating in such practices, they shall not be assigned to participate, nor shall they be harassed, disciplined or treated in a discriminatory manner.
3. The professional nurse shall not discourage, attempt to discourage, dissuade, nor attempt to dissuade by affirmative action or silence, any patient from seeking or receiving reasonable treatment where objection to such treatment arises because of the ethical or religious beliefs of the nurse.

When proposed policies or practices to which nurses may have ethical or religious objections are introduced, joint and periodic review by Nursing Administration and appropriate other professional groups shall precede implementation. Prior to any such review, the above standards shall apply.

The views of other health personnel regarding their involvement in procedures or treatment to which they may object on the basis of ethical or religious beliefs shall be respected as well.

## **Resolution**

### **OCCUPANT SAFETY**

***Submitted By: Parent Child Health Council***

WHEREAS, Every week 750 people are killed in motor vehicle accidents nationwide;  
and

WHEREAS, Every week 77,000 people are injured in motor vehicle accidents nationwide; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 1,800 Massachusetts residents suffer severe head injuries in auto accidents annually; and

WHEREAS, Regular use of safety belts would reduce traffic deaths by 14,500 a year in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The chances of being fatally injured are almost 25 times greater if you are thrown from the car than if you are buckled into a seat belt; and

WHEREAS, Passenger restraint devices have a proven effect of 50 percent to 60 percent in preventing injuries and deaths due to car crashes; and

WHEREAS, The passage of child restraint laws in every state has contributed to a major decrease in the highway death rate for children under five years of age; and

WHEREAS, Major safety advocacy groups recognize that the promotion of safety belt use through education has raised general public usage in Massachusetts to only 32 percent; and/or 1/2 the National average; and

WHEREAS, The efforts of nurses, as informed public health educators, are crucial in motivating persons who drive to have all occupants protected by approved restraint devices; and

WHEREAS, The 1986 ANA House of Delegates resolved to endorse state efforts to achieve mandatory safety belt legislation and actively support education programs to encourage the use of safety belts; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the MNA and its membership declare their support for a Seat Belt Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which states: "The driver of any motor vehicle and all passengers 12 years old and up must buckle up in both the front and back seats. Children under the age of 12 must be secured in an approved child seat or with a properly adjusted seatbelt; and be it further

RESOLVED, That every effort be made to encourage the consistent use of safety belts throughout Massachusetts regardless of the existence of a law; and be it further

RESOLVED, That every effort be made to develop and support programs for nurses which heighten the awareness of safety issues surrounding seat belt and car seat use; and be it further

RESOLVED, That action be taken to target at-risk groups such as teenagers and older citizens for their support of the law; and be it further

RESOLVED, In order to communicate the seriousness of this message, MNA send copies of this resolution to: organizations and agencies on the local, state, and national levels as well as individuals and community groups in Massachusetts who play an active role in advocating for safety belt and car seat use and education.

**Adopted: 1986 Updated: 1993**