A professional organization is created to deal with issues of concern to those practicing in the profession. In North America the major nursing organizations are the National League for Nursing (NLN) and American Nurses Association (ANA). The NLN is concerned with the improvement of nursing education, nursing services, and health care delivery in the United States.

ANA was formed in the late nineteenth century to improve standards of health and the availability of health care, to foster high standards for nursing, and to promote the professional development and general and economic welfare of nurses. The ANA is part of the International Council of Nursing (ICN). The objectives of the ICN parallel those of the ANA: promoting national associations of nurses, improving standards of nursing practice, seeking a higher status for nurses, and providing an international power base for nurses.

The ANA is active in political, professional, and financial issues affecting health care and the nursing profession. ANA is a strong lobbyist in professional nursing practice issues, such as limits of overtime hours. In this example, the ANA extensively lobbied state legislatures to restrict the length of overtime any one nurse’s shift can be extended. This was due to the safety risk of 12 to 16 hours on client and nurse safety. There is an increased risk of treatment errors and nurse injury when the nurse’s workday is extended.