15.5: Similarities and Differences Between Professional Self-Regulation and Unionization

Mandates

As previously discussed, the mandate of the professional regulatory body and that of the union are vastly different and yet they have one common goal: the delivery of safe patient care through supporting registered nurse practice. Nursing standards cannot be met if environments do not have the appropriate leadership, policies, staffing, and workloads to allow RNs to enact their legislated, professional role. Therefore, the mandates of the regulatory body and the union cannot be realized if such issues are not addressed.

For the regulatory body, protection of the public is not possible if their members are faced with unsafe and unsupportive work environments that do not use research and best practice guidelines as the foundation of care provided. For the union, CBAs alone cannot resolve issues of professional practice. Unions also vigorously promote the use of best practice research as this not only establishes quality workplaces for members, but also ensures a safe environment in which patients are provided care. In this regard, individual RNs need to be keenly aware of the initiatives of these two important organizations and become active and engaged.

This engagement can be achieved through running for council and board positions, becoming involved in organizational committees, and attending annual general meetings, where items directly impacting practice, and of interest to members, are raised, discussed, voted on, and enacted. In addition, members must keep up to date on organization news, correspondence, and projects. Members must also be willing to communicate directly with the professional body and the union regarding concerns and obstacles to meeting professional standards; this communication is an important and effective way of raising and working to resolve issues. This participation cannot be left to others, as the profession cannot support itself without the empowerment and voice of individual RNs.
Essential Learning Activity 15.4.1

For more information follow the link to the comparison chart of the “Three Pillars of Registered Nursing” supports: Regulatory Body, Professional Association and Union. Published by the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba. *Nurse Link*, Winter 2017, (p. 10).

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe the difference in mandates for each group.
2. Which group would you approach for information on nursing standards?