

WCET/SAN General Disclosure – February 2021 Podcast Transcript

Dan Silverman: Good day, listening public. Today is February 22nd, 2021, and thank you for listening to General Disclosure, the podcast from SAN. My name is Dan Silverman and I'm joined, as always, by my co-host, Cheryl Dowd. Cheryl, is your walkie-talkie tuned into the correct channel today?

Cheryl Dowd: Absolutely. Good to be here and good to have our guest for today.

Dan Silverman: Yes. Today, we're joined by Nancy Spector, director of regulatory innovations at the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. Nancy, welcome.

Nancy Spector: Thank you. It's great to be here.

Dan Silverman: I'm going to start you off, Nancy, with a couple of questions that we ask all of our guests. This first question is defining your career, or your current role, however you choose, why do you do this? You're clearly someone with talents and interests of many. Why this?

Nancy Spector: Well, that is a great question. I came from academia. I was a tenured faculty member, gave up tenure to try this position at NCSBN because it was on a national level and I was really interested in nursing nationally, especially nursing education and what's going on with the boards of nursing and how they regulate education, so I reluctantly left my teaching job because I did have tenure and came here and I was told by all my mentors, "Well, you can always go back to teaching," but I loved it. I really love being in the know of what's going on education-wise all over the US because our boards of nursing approve all of the nursing programs, so they really have a pulse on what's going on, so that's why.

Dan Silverman: What was your academic focus?

Nancy Spector: What was my academic what?

Dan Silverman: Focus.

Nancy Spector: Focus? Well, I taught what we call medical-surgical nursing. As part of that, I taught critical care, but I also taught geriatrics. I also, however, taught in the graduate program and in academia, sometimes you have to teach where you're needed. I taught research, I taught pharmacology, so really, a pretty general background in teaching in nursing education.

Dan Silverman: If nursing as a field were to go away, vanish, what would you do instead?

Nancy Spector: Oh, that really is a good question. I would probably go into... When I started in my pre-licensure education program, I was in dramatics and I really enjoyed that, but got detoured because in order to really get good grades, you had to be in a lot of different plays. I was at the University of Wisconsin at the time, so it was big, there were a lot of opportunities, and so I looked outside of that and

went into nursing. Before that, I actually had also considered medicine and I had considered law. All of those areas would still be very appealing to me. I don't know if I'd do as well, though, in acting, I just love it.

Dan Silverman: That's already just a great teaser for our final segment of Cheryl On Musicals. I'm looking forward to hearing some of your takes as well. I'm going to read a very short quote from a 2018 paper about board of nursing approval for RN education programs that you wrote and ask you just a brief follow-up.

Nancy Spector: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dan Silverman: When a program wants to try an innovative educational strategy that is outside the BON's rules, many BONs exercise the NCSBN model rules and innovative approaches, which allow a program to pilot and test the strategy. The program presents data to the BON demonstrating effective outcomes with no unintended consequences. It is likely that the BON will allow the program to continue with the strategy. Can you talk a little bit more about this or maybe provide an example?

Nancy Spector: Sure. Well, we started this I think back in 2010 or something, when we had nursing programs that were encouraged to do innovations to come to the board and say, "We just absolutely would love to be innovative, but we can't because the board, it doesn't allow, there are barriers," so our board brought it to us as a committee. We had a committee of our peers come together to look at it and the first thing we did was a survey to see, in fact, are boards of nursing barriers to innovation, and we found that almost everything that the faculty wanted to do really would be allowed by the board of nursing, so we do have on our website some tips for faculty who want to be innovative. The first thing is go to your board and nursing and see if that's allowed because it usually is.

However, there were some situations where things were barriers, so we did develop some model rules. This is model administrative law language that the boards of nursing can use, they can use them if they wish. I think about half of them adopted some form of them. This would allow if you're really doing something outside of the board of nursing rules, just collect data on it. That has been in effect until now, but our model rules are going to be voted on again in August, and we have found that most of the boards have incorporated everything now. Programs seem to know about going to the board of nursing and I think actually that section might be removed from the model rules in August, depending on how our members vote on it.

Dan Silverman: Do you know of anything about other professions that have similar structures for their regulatory oversight, something that you'd like to borrow?

Nancy Spector: In terms of having board of nursing approval, is that what you mean? In the US, the model for licensing nurses is that the student must graduate from a board-of-nursing-approved program in order to be made eligible for the NCLEX, and

when they do that, the boards of nursing are asking that dean and director, "Are these students competent to practice with patients?" Because we do have an NCLEX, which measures knowledge, but that competence and working with practice has to be evaluated in a different way, so that's the way we in nursing evaluate it. We have a lot of nursing, we have four million nurses, so to do simulation with every graduates would be out of our scope. I think medicine does that, but this is our way.

That dean and director than attest of the fact that their graduates are competent for entry-level nursing, and that's why we have approval in, I think it's probably the only healthcare field in the US and probably across the world. I don't think many other countries do this as well in nursing, but it has served us well because students sometimes can get through a program, pass, pass, pass, and it has to be that dean at the very end that decides if that student is really ready to practice entry-level nursing, so it's really a public protection, I'd say, in nursing.

Dan Silverman: Sometimes our members seek additional clarification on the difference, both in nursing and in other professions between pre and post-licensure regulatory schemes. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Nancy Spector: Can you ask the question a little bit differently? I'm not quite sure what you mean. Pre and post-regulatory schemes?

Dan Silverman: Pre and post like RN would be the initial license practice versus [crosstalk 00:08:59].

Nancy Spector: APRN?

Dan Silverman: Yes, yes.

Nancy Spector: Oh, okay. I gotcha. Well, for APRNs, or advanced practice nursing professions, about half of the boards of nursing approve the nursing programs, not all of them, whereas in pre-licensure, they all do, or in one state, it is done by, if they require all their programs to be accredited, and that would be Utah, but in APRNs, that is not the case. However, all of those programs need to be accredited. In pre-licensure programs, it depends on the state. Some require accreditation, like Utah, but not all states require accreditation, so that is different there. But even given that, about 50% of the states do approve the APRN programs, and I can tell you, it really has helped in some situations that have happened in APRN education.

Dan Silverman: Another resource, and then Cheryl, feel free to jump in any time, but another resource that our listeners should check out is the Board of Nursing Professional Licensure Compilation on the NCSBN website. I guess I just wanted to first point that out and thank you for all the hard work that went into that. Then I just had a question for, the question I had was, do you have any suggestions for other

professions, other association of state boards looking to make similar resources?

Nancy Spector: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, I think it's really helpful. It did take us a lot of time. We did it in-house, so we didn't have to hire anybody, but basically, what we did is go to all of the board of nursing websites, looking up their regulations and then what they required, and then put that together on this website. But it was really important to us that we verified what we found, because sometimes you might interpret something differently than the board does, so we verified everything with each board of nursing. Because of that, it did take us a while, but I would really say that in the end, it's so worth it to any other professions out there because once you do it, it's done, for the most part. We'll update it yearly and that'll be coming up in July, but not too many regulations are changed.

It's been so helpful for the nursing programs. Basically, what they do, go there, pull down the states one by one, they see what the requirements are. They know the program so much better than the board of nursing. They know what they have in their programs, and so they know if they meet those requirements, so as the US Department of Education says, they determine if they meet those requirements or not. I would say if they have somebody sit down and do it in an afternoon, they could certainly do it in an afternoon. It could possibly take the program a day, but no longer than a day to do that. Otherwise, we were hearing from programs that they were going hither and thither and trying to email each board of nursing. The board of nursing doesn't know anything about their program, so they couldn't answer them and they were having a terrible amount of time trying to do this, so I would really encourage other professions to do this. Anybody that wanted to could reach out to me and we could help with that.

Dan Silverman: Cheryl, do you have any follow-ups for Nancy at this point?

Cheryl Dowd: Well, I can't say enough about how much we appreciate the work that went into bringing that together on the national association site. We know it was a concern that states not get too inundated with communications from institutions because that's just such a difficult thing for them to manage. Do you have any suggestions for us? We recognize the need. We've been reaching out to national associations, and actually, as I've shared with you, Nancy, we've used your website as a model for other national associations. Is there anything that we can suggest? We know that state websites, they have a role of the state boards, they need to protect the public, and I understand that and I know that they're also reaching out to candidates. Is there something that we can do to inform state boards, not just nursing, anywhere, any profession, about how to communicate with educators, maybe from their website? Maybe have something that's kind of educator-focused for post-secondary institutions to be able to reach on their websites? Because right now, that doesn't seem to be one of the voices that they're reaching to. Do you have any thoughts?

Nancy Spector: Well, what we did, and because boards of nursing are so connected with the programs because they approve them, in each state, they're very close to the educator, so what we did is send out communication to the boards of nursing and they shared it with their educators. Many times, they go to deans and directors' meetings and they shared it outright with them, so that was the way we were able to share with our educators. I don't know if other professions have that ability to do that.

I will say that going each of the websites can be really hard for the programs. I just think that communication with the educators, whatever they have, the kind of partnerships or whatever that they have, deans and directors' meetings, whatever they do, I think that's probably the best way, because we were told from the boards of nursing the deans were very interested in this and got up and they actually would do a webinar with it and show the website and they were very interested, so I don't know the kind of opportunities these other fields have, but that seems to be the best way, that almost face-to-face communication with them, if that's possible, or email blast, or something like that.

Cheryl Dowd: Well, that makes sense. As I hear you saying, this is a one-stop shop, if you will-

Nancy Spector: Yes.

Cheryl Dowd: ... because they can hit most states with very good information there and you plan to update it annually, which is fantastic. If we did have more professions that were able to do that, that would be great. Yeah, the alternative is if states had a section of their website that was educator-focused, but this is... I'm hearing all different alternatives. There was one, this may even surprise you, Nancy, there is one national association for this profession that is willing to do this on a fee-based consultant situation where the institution, for a fee, can reach out to the national association where they'll act as a consultant.

Nancy Spector: No.

Cheryl Dowd: They must have an incredibly large staff to be able to do that. This is not even something that can be a consideration in some professions, but I just thought that was an interesting take on it. But I think your take on it does give, as I said, a one-stop shop to be able to hit these states in a quick fashion to reach the different pieces that they need, so we're very grateful that you all went to this work to make this available.

Nancy Spector: Well, and I think your idea of having a place on the website is absolutely, probably, essential. That's exactly what we did. I mean, it's under our education tab on our website, and I think that does help. Of course, where our link is, we also have a lot of other resources for them, including they can click and even read the regulation, so that is also important, you're right.

- Cheryl Dowd: It's good. It's great. It's a great model and I hope that others will take the time to look at it because some of them, they think they have something, but it's not nearly as dynamic as what you have.
- Dan Silverman: Nancy, is there anything else that we've missed, or that you want to get out there to the public, to our members? Anything else I should have asked?
- Nancy Spector: No, not that I can think of, except just telling them, please feel free to contact me, nspector@ncsbn.org, and I'd be happy to help in any way I could.
- Dan Silverman: That's great. Thank you so much. We'll put a link to those two resources I had spoke about earlier in the show notes as well.
- Nancy Spector: Great.
- Dan Silverman: Hopefully, anyone who's interested will know where to go. I'm going to go ahead and skip the second segment, Out of Left Field. I think our limited time will be better served and more entertaining if we switch right over to Cheryl On Musicals. Nancy, I hope you'll stick around. Cheryl, we had a little teaser at the end of last show for our diehard cousins and so forth who listen to this. You mentioned that your daughter, Cecily, is going to be appearing in Urinetown, but you'd have more to say about it this time.
- Cheryl Dowd: Well, I'm actually really interested to hear more about what Nancy has to share, too, about her acting past, but I just will, just to let you know, Urinetown, it's a satire. It's very funny. Specifically, it satirizes a legal system where they are regulating the use of, they have a water shortage, so they're regulating the use of urinals and toilets, public toilets, so it's pretty funny. It was on Broadway 10, 15 years ago, and so it's a production that is seen at colleges and high schools. I first saw it at a high school production. I'm interested to see what the college production does. Cecily will play a character named Hope.
- Nancy, tell us about things that you have. What's your favorite role that you ever did in a production?
- Nancy Spector: Well, I don't know that it's a role, but one of my favorite things that happened, it happened in the fall. It was a beautiful day and our class went outside and what our professor wanted us to do is pretend that we're talking in a foreign language, and of course, I had never done anything like that before, and everybody started speaking in a foreign language, and what we figured out, and he had predicted this, obviously, if you just go out and speak in a foreign language, for some reason, it's always something that sounds Chinese, so that was very interesting to me and it was interesting to hear everybody, but it was a lot of...
- Cheryl Dowd: Oh, my goodness.

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- Nancy Spector: It was really interesting and I think acting really serves people well wherever they go in life, because if you do presentations or whatever, you always remember that, the presence, how you're presenting yourself, so it was a great background, but probably I don't have the talent to have gone further into it.
- Dan Silverman: Nancy, have you remained a theater fan? Is there things that you still like to see or [crosstalk 00:21:28]?
- Nancy Spector: Yeah. Oh, yeah, definitely. I love theater, and of course, my husband and I are terribly into Gilbert and Sullivan. We were last March, we were so excited to see Pirates of Penzance at the University of Chicago, and of course, that was March, so it was canceled. This March is canceled as well, so we're very sad. We haven't seen Gilbert and Sullivan in a year now, but love that. My husband got me into that. Just so funny. If you can just even read all of the words before you go, because sometimes you can't hear everything, it's just hilarious. Gilbert and Sullivan made a great team.
- Cheryl Dowd: Fantastic.
- Dan Silverman: Well, I think that is as good a place as any to leave it. I guess, actually, I'll ask one follow-up on that, Nancy. If there's one Gilbert and Sullivan to start with for the skeptic, where would you start?
- Nancy Spector: Well, I would probably start with Pirates of Penzance just because it is just hilarious, and especially at the very end when the wife is never really the wife, and oh, it's just my favorite one. I mean, all those pirate ships, and oh, it's just so hilarious. There was one and my husband would know which one it is that was a little dark and we hadn't anticipated that, we'd never seen it, and when we went, it didn't strike us like all of the other ones are, but love them all, really. My husband loves Gondoliers. We oftentimes listened to the CDs in our car.
- Dan Silverman: That's great. Well, thank you so much, Nancy. This was a lot of great information about musicals, about nursing, about regulation, so we really appreciate it. Thank you, and thank you, as always, Cheryl.
- Cheryl Dowd: Thank you, Dan. I always appreciate the way you host this. This is always great. Thanks.
- Dan Silverman: Great.
- Cheryl Dowd: Nancy, so happy to have you with us today.
- Nancy Spector: Well, thank you. It was great to be here.
- Dan Silverman: All right. Thanks, everybody.
- Nancy Spector: Thanks. Bye-bye.