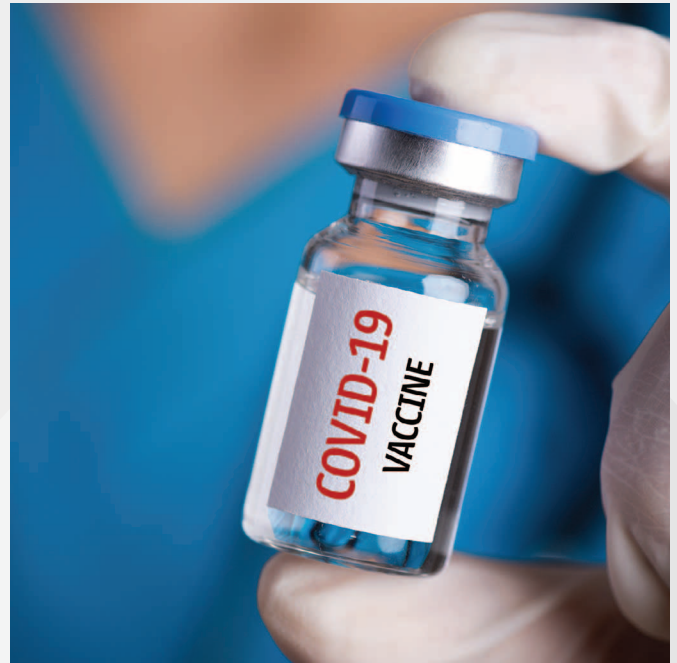


## Advocating for nurses' health and safety



■ Online health information ■ Benefits of storytelling

# ANA advocates for nurses' health and safety

*Collaborating in the new year to address pandemic challenges together*

**A**s nurses contend with the pandemic and its multi-layered effects into 2021, the American Nurses Association (ANA) continues to advocate relentlessly for critical measures to address the needs of nurses and communities, from sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) to vaccine-related information, and to provide educational resources to support RNs' physical and mental health.

The race for safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines has advanced at a record pace. At press time, Moderna, Inc. and Pfizer were seeking emergency use authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for their vaccines. Once vaccines are approved, critical members of the nation's nursing workforce will likely be among those receiving priority access. Nurses also will play a critical role in educating the public about the vaccines, as well as administering them.

"All nurses and healthcare professionals must receive consistent information and ongoing education from their employers, credible public health agencies, the Food and Drug Administration, and other trusted sources about COVID-19 vaccine trials and approval processes," said ANA President Ernest Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN. "This is non-negotiable and imperative for nurses to help educate the public."

To assist nurses in understanding issues surrounding vaccine development and distribution, the ANA Center for Ethics and Human Rights released *Guiding Principles for Nurses and the COVID-19 Vaccines*, which outlines the importance of access, transparency, equity, efficacy, and safety.

In addition, ANA is offering an on-demand webinar on COVID-19 vaccine development. More than 14,000 nurses have registered for this educational activity, which is aimed at helping them understand more about these vaccines—their potential safety and efficacy and other information related to ensuring the health and well-being of nurses and patients.

Grant recently participated in a COVID-19 vaccine phase III clinical trial at the University of Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), motivated in part because the virus has been disproportionately affecting communities of color.

"There's a need for more minority participation in clinical studies like this because COVID-19 is mostly affecting black and brown populations," Grant said in an interview with UNC Healthcare. "We need to gather enough evidence of whether this vaccine will help in these populations. And if the vaccine is approved, people of color will be more inclined to try it if they know people who look like them participated safely in the trial."



ANA President Ernest Grant participated in a COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial.

## Advocating relentlessly

As the new year brings a new administration and Congress, ANA persists with advocacy for clear, evidence-based guidelines on COVID-19 and resources, including PPE, to protect nurses, other healthcare workers, first responders, and the public. Much of ANA's advocacy has centered on issues raised by nurses who responded to several national, online surveys in the series conducted by ANA and the American Nurses Foundation. In the first survey, completed in the spring of 2020, 32,000-plus nurse participants revealed their top three concerns: a shortage of PPE, preparedness, including understanding their facility's response plan, and potentially contaminating their families. Two other surveys on PPE showed ongoing concerns, including the reuse of N-95 respirators and other single-use PPE; results from a new survey weren't available at press time. The survey findings are used to inform activities and to amplify nurses' voices in the media and on Capitol Hill.

When safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines are made available, ANA has strongly recommended nurses are prioritized to be vaccinated according to recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. ANA believes that nurses should not be retaliated against if they choose not to be immunized.

On a related front, ANA has called on the Biden-Harris transition team to name additional nurses to its COVID-19 task force and communicated its top priorities to the incoming administration, including the urgent need to increase the PPE supply, ensure access to COVID-19 vaccinations, and address healthcare disparities.



In November 2020, Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, was named a member of the Biden-Harris Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) transition team. Wakefield, a North Dakota Nurses Association member, served as HHS acting deputy secretary in the Obama administration.



**Mary Wakefield**

In ANA President Grant's letter congratulating President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris, and outlining ANA's COVID-19 priorities, he said, "In addition to our COVID-19 work outlined below, ANA has been a proud supporter of the Affordable Care Act, as well as many other healthcare issues of importance to your Administration. ANA stands ready to work with the Biden Administration to tackle the healthcare issues facing our nation, including the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing social determinants of health, racial disparities, as well as rebuilding our nation's public health infrastructure."

Additionally, ANA has developed a comprehensive "100 Day Advocacy Plan" and continues to monitor federal legislative and regulatory developments regarding COVID-19 while providing vital information to Congress, the administration, and regulatory agencies on the impact of the pandemic on nursing. Also, the association continues to collaborate with constituent and state nurses associations (C/SNAs) to further address their needs, particularly as hot spots emerge.

## **Collaboration, education, and mental health**

ANA has been working closely with the American Medical Association and the American Hospital Association on a range of advocacy efforts, including asking Congress and federal officials to address PPE concerns, other preventive measures, and vaccine-related issues. The groups have collaborated to create public service announcements on the importance of adhering to public health measures, such as mask wearing, to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Beyond vaccine-related education, ANA offers on-demand webinars and quick videos addressing topics such as COVID-19 disease progression and nursing interventions, racial disparities, and the use and reuse of PPE. ANA's webinars are on pace to reach more than 200,000 nurses who have registered for close to half a million webinar sessions. ANA has joined with the CDC and other partner organizations on Project Firstline, which is focused on infection control and prevention training (See story, page 49). The training strengthens healthcare workers' knowledge and awareness to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Informed by findings from its Pulse on the Nation's Nurses Survey Series, the Foundation developed resources to address the short- and long-term needs of nurses' mental health through The Well-being Initiative. Partnering with ANA organizational affiliates the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, the American Psychiatric Nurses Association, and the Emergency Nurses Association, this effort includes virtual support systems and a digital toolkit to help nurses build resilience, manage stress, and overcome COVID-19-related trauma.

"Nurses are putting their physical and mental health on the line to protect us all during this pandemic," said Kate Judge, executive director, American Nurses Foundation. "Nurses are always there for us and we owe it to them to support their well-being during this crisis and in the future."

In related work, ANA launched a nurse suicide and prevention resource. Research indicates that nurses are at a much higher risk of suicide than the general public. Developed by an ANA Enterprise Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ committee co-chaired by Judy Davidson, DNP, RN, MCCM, FAAN, and Bernadette Melnyk, PhD, APRN-CNP, FAAN, FNAP, the site provides information and tools to build resilience, assist in an active crisis, offer coping strategies, and honor a nurse's memory.

In other partnerships, ANA continues to work with its C/SNAs and the Tri-Council for Nursing, an alliance between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, ANA, the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL), the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and the National League for Nursing, to share lessons learned so far from the pandemic through the lens of nursing practice, education, and regulation. In addition, ANA, AONL, and Johnson & Johnson have partnered on the *Charting the Nursing Path Forward Listening Tour*.

## **Resources**

**ANA COVID-19 Video Education Series**  
[hubs.ly/H0ym54X0](https://hubs.ly/H0ym54X0)

**ANA COVID-19 Resource Center**  
[nursingworld.org/coronavirus](https://nursingworld.org/coronavirus)

**Guiding Principles for Nurses and the COVID-19 Vaccines**  
[nursingworld.org/~4a94ba/globalassets/covid19/vaccines/guiding-principles-for-nurses-and-the-covid19-vaccine\\_v2.pdf](https://nursingworld.org/~4a94ba/globalassets/covid19/vaccines/guiding-principles-for-nurses-and-the-covid19-vaccine_v2.pdf)

**The Well-being Initiative**  
[nursingworld.org/thewellbeinginitiative](https://nursingworld.org/thewellbeinginitiative)

**Nurse Suicide Prevention and Resilience**  
[nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nurse-suicide-prevention](https://nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nurse-suicide-prevention)

## Making New Year's resolutions?

### Try these tips from Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™

**M**any people are eager to turn the page and begin the new year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And, given the added stress on nurses, paying attention to your health is a good idea. With that in mind, we took a fresh look at these tips from the Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ (HNHN) blog and adapted them for 2021.

According to Entrepreneur.com, research suggests that taking bite-size, manageable steps is the way to achieve lasting change. Try picking one or two goals that resonate with you and work on accomplishing them.

#### Take advantage of preparing more meals at home

Instead of committing to a strict diet, incorporate more home-cooked meals into your repertoire. Research from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health shows that food made at home has less fat, calories, and sugar than meals eaten out. Look for menu ideas on your favorite sites or at HNHN.org.

#### Make time for one self-care activity per week

Nurses are working in stressful, fast-paced environments, often dealing with life-or-death situations. It's imperative to do things that nourish and replenish you. Not only will you feel calmer and happier, but you'll be better able to care for your patients and the people you love.

#### Connect with a friend virtually

According to Mayo Clinic, strong friendships can make us healthier. These days, many of us are connecting with old friends over Zoom or FaceTime to practice physical distancing. Think about how you can foster new and existing relationships. Ideas to consider:

- Text or call a friend you haven't spoken to in a while.
- Make virtual lunch dates with coworkers.
- Recruit friends or coworkers to take on a virtual fitness challenge.

#### Sleep a minimum of 8 hours per night

Between long shifts, working nontraditional hours, and the stressful nature of the job, nurses may have difficulty getting high-quality, restorative sleep. However, Harvard Medicine reports that lack of sleep can lead to obesity and chronic health issues, so prioritizing sleep isn't a luxury—it's an important action to take for your health. Visit HNHN.org for resources to increase and improve your shut-eye.



#### Spend more time in nature

*National Geographic* reports that spending time outdoors may reduce stress and increase health and well-being. Try this healthy, realistic New Year's resolution: Spend more time outside. You can play with the kids in your life in the backyard or take walks in a park or community garden during your break.

#### Minimize your time on social media

Studies suggest that spending significant time on social media can lead to feelings of inadequacy and even depression. This year, take a social media break or try to be more intentional when you use it. You can:

- Take a day (or more) off from social networking each week.
- Limit social media to your desktop or cell phone, but not both.
- Avoid comparing your life to the perfect images you see on your various channels.

#### Start meditating

According to the National Institutes of Health, meditation may reduce blood pressure, anxiety, depression, and insomnia. And people who regularly practice meditation report feeling more at peace and happier than the general population. Ideas to consider:

- Download a meditation app.
- Set a reminder on your phone so you'll remember to sit quietly or meditate for a few minutes each day.
- Commit to being more mindful throughout the day.

Once you decide on your New Year's resolutions, connect with the HNHN community to share and find support at HNHN.org. Read this blog at <https://engage.healthynursehealthynation.org/blogs/8/2760>.

Content courtesy of HNHN and Aha Media.

## Introducing new ANA member benefits

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is offering these new member benefits as a part of its personal benefits program. ANA has carefully screened partners who are committed to providing ANA member nurses with exceptional value and service.

### Professional liability insurance offered by NSO

Nurses need to protect themselves and their careers by maintaining professional liability insurance, also known as medical malpractice insurance. It's not safe to assume that an employer's liability insurance will cover you when a lawsuit or complaint is filed.

Nurses Service Organization (NSO) has more than 45 years of experience defending nursing professionals from allegations of medical malpractice and licensing complaints. With over 500,000 nursing professionals insured and 60+ professional nursing association partners, NSO is the premier administrator of nurses' malpractice insurance in the United States.

Visit the NSO website to browse the case studies and articles in the Learning Center, including NSO's 4th Nurses Claim Report. It provides statistical data and an analysis of malpractice and licensing claims, as well as recommendations on how you can avoid potential problems in your practice. Learn more and receive a quick rate quote at [nso.com](http://nso.com).



### Financial wellness offered by Prudential

ANA's collaboration with Prudential helps ANA members gain greater support when navigating their financial wellness. The Prudential digital financial wellness platform provides ANA members with access to free tools and solutions tailored to their individual needs. These convenient tools allow you to

tackle a broad range of topics such as budgeting, college funding, retirement planning, and tax and estate planning strategies. Prudential offers virtual financial wellness educational webinars to help you manage finances during the coronavirus crisis.

Visit [prudential.com/anamember](http://prudential.com/anamember) to start experiencing the benefits of the Prudential's Financial Wellness Program.



### Student loan refinancing offered by Laurel Road

The pandemic and economic stresses have made life difficult for nurses with significant student debt, even with the federal relief offered in 2020 from the CARES Act. But 2021 offers an unclear future.

The new year is an excellent time to evaluate your student loan repayment strategy. Laurel Road specializes in working with nurses. ANA members could potentially save thousands over the life of their loans.

"Helping nurses reach their full potential is behind everything we do as an organization, and we understand the important role financial health plays in this," said Debbie Hatmaker, PhD, RN, FAAN, chief nursing officer at ANA. "That's why we're thrilled to partner with Laurel Road to help our members manage their student debt and find new opportunities for financial education. Nurses are incredibly busy and dedicated professionals, and any opportunity to support their self-care, including alleviating stress from finances, will go a long way."

To learn more visit [laurelroad.com/partnerships/ana](http://laurelroad.com/partnerships/ana).



## Year of the Nurse extended to 2021

The ANA Enterprise joins with the World Health Organization and global colleagues in extending the Year of the Nurse and Midwife into 2021 because of the impact of the pandemic.

The recognition will build on the increased visibility of nurses' contributions from 2020, and the expansion of National Nurses Week to Nurses Month in May. Additionally, 2021 marks milestone anniversaries across the ANA Enterprise: 125 years for ANA, 30 years for the American Nurses Credentialing Center, and 25 years for *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, ANA's scholarly journal.

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The Nurses Month theme is “You Make a Difference,” and weekly themes are planned for self-care, recognition, professional development, and community engagement. The free Nurses Month Webinar is planned for May 19 with a focus on *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 4th edition. Stay tuned for more information about the Year of the Nurse 2021 and visit [anayearofthenurse.org](http://anayearofthenurse.org).

## ANA elections: Call for nominations

The Individual Member Division (IMD) of the American Nurses Association (ANA) provides the organizational structure to permit ANA-Only members (those who elect to join ANA directly at the national level only) to participate in ANA governance, as well as in the programmatic work of ANA as expressed in the ANA Bylaws. The IMD was established by an amendment to the ANA Bylaws on June 26, 2003.

The IMD is seeking nominations for the following positions in the 2021 election:

- Vice Chairperson
- Members-at-Large/Membership Assembly Representatives—seeking a minimum of two individuals.

The two individuals with the highest number of votes will be voted for as the Members-at-Large/Member-

ship Assembly representatives and serve on the IMD Executive Committee.

To review details of the roles and responsibilities of each position, please access the Individual Member Division Operating Policies and Procedures, under the resources tab: [nursingworld.org/membership/individual-member-division/](http://nursingworld.org/membership/individual-member-division/)

The terms of office for each position are 2 years, from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2023.

This is the official notice of election. To qualify as a candidate for office, the nominee must be a member of the ANA IMD (ANA-Only membership category). Watch for email communication with information about the nomination process and criteria beginning April 15. If you do not have an email on file with ANA, you will receive print notifications. The due date for nominations is May 15.

## ANCC PTAP achieves US Department of Labor recognition

The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship has designated the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Practice Transition Accreditation Program® (PTAP) a Standards Recognition Entity (SRE). ANCC PTAP was among an inaugural cohort of only 18 organizations recognized as SREs by the Department of Labor to bolster high-quality Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs).

The IRAPs are new industry-driven and customizable apprenticeships by the Department of Labor that provide individuals with opportunities to obtain relevant workplace knowledge and progressively advance skills. Professionals working across a variety of industries, such as healthcare and information technology, receive specialized knowledge and experi-

ence, focused mentorship and supervision, and industry-recognized credentials upon completion of the program.

ANCC PTAP will serve as an accredited, independent organization to develop, oversee, and evaluate transition-to-practice programs for RNs and advanced practice RNs that are consistent with Department of Labor standards for IRAPs.

“ANCC is thrilled to receive this important recognition and to represent the nation’s nursing workforce,” said ANCC PTAP Director Sheri Cosme, DNP, RN, NPD-BC. “The SRE designation aligns with our goal to set and remain the accreditation standard for nurse residency and fellowship programs.”

To learn more, visit [apprenticeship.gov](http://apprenticeship.gov).

# Online health information and self-diagnosis

To: Ethics Advisory Board

From: Concerned RN

Subject: Self-diagnosis

During the COVID-19 pandemic, patients are asking me about symptoms they're experiencing and my opinion about information they've found on the internet and in social media. I find that I'm also seeking information about symptoms on the internet and am self-diagnosing. What can I tell patients about the accuracy of health information found online?

**The World Health Organization has referred to the explosion of information and misinformation as an "infodemic."**

5 states that "The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety." Provision 5.2 emphasizes the importance of nurses being role models for health maintenance and health promotion measures. For nurses and patients who use the internet as a tool for self-diagnosis, it's important to determine whether websites are trustworthy and reliable sources of health information.

In general, health websites that are sponsored by federal government agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, are reliable. Other trustworthy sources include the National Institutes of Health and its website from the National Library of Medicine (MedlinePlus.gov), Mayo Clinic, WebMD, and university health websites. In general, one should be knowledgeable about the questions to ask when evaluating a website, such as identifying the sponsor, authors, and contributors to the site, its overall purpose, and whether it's current.



From: ANA Center for Ethics and Human Rights

Nursing continues to be considered the most trusted and ethical of professions, according to annual Gallup polls. Patients frequently ask nurses about symptoms and about whether to believe and act on health information they find online. As nurses, we also tend to self-diagnose. Self-diagnosis can be defined as the process of identifying healthcare conditions in oneself using various resources, including those found by searching the internet and social media.

The World Health Organization has referred to the explosion of information and misinformation as an "infodemic." Risks and benefits are associated with using online information. Some can be helpful and accurate; however, some is misleading and inaccurate. Taking hydroxychloroquine to cure COVID-19 is a recent example of misinformation that's put people in danger.

How can the *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* (the Code) ([nursingworld.org/coe-view-only/](http://nursingworld.org/coe-view-only/)) provide guidance in this issue? Provision

Valid and reliable websites also will display the designation of a credentialing organization (Health on the Net code). This code indicates the site has been certified as providing accurate, credible, and ethical health information.

Nurses must be knowledgeable about the criteria by which a site's information is vetted, both when evaluating oneself as well as when helping patients find accurate information. Above all, the information must be based on science and use data as the source for evidence-based solutions. The internet can be a good starting place to finding useful information; however, it shouldn't replace a visit with a healthcare professional.

— Response by Linda L. Olson PhD, MBA, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, member of the ANA Center for Ethics and Human Rights Advisory Board.

Do you have a question for the Ethics Inbox?  
Submit at [ethics@ana.org](mailto:ethics@ana.org).

# Storytelling: Resilience and influence in minutes

By Jessica Stein Diamond

**D**uring the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses too often are the last and only person in the room when a patient dies.

“To be that person who is able to be there when their loved ones cannot, you are an important witness and force in their life,” said Danielle Eden, BSN, RNC-NIC, a neonatal intensive care clinical nurse at Cleveland Clinic Hillcrest Hospital. “Yet it can be hard at the end of a shift to leave it all on the floor and then go home. Nurses don’t often have much time to reflect on what they’re going through, on the grief and the stress.”



Danielle Eden

Eden developed a useful coping skill for this historic and challenging time at a storytelling workshop created by the American Nurses Foundation for the 2019 ANCC National Magnet Conference®. “Telling my story was something I would never have seen the value in, never would have had the confidence to share,” said Eden, whose mentor, Nancy DeWalt, MSN, RN, NE-BC, advocated for her to be selected for the workshop. “I learned that sharing a story can be a form of self-care that only takes a few minutes [and] that can help a nurse process intense experiences, decrease stress, and feel less alone. It’s a way to support each other.”



Danielle Eden uses storytelling to share lessons she has learned from caring for newborn patients.

Storytelling is an efficient way to support mindfulness and wellness, noted Eden. “As nurses, we do emotionally hard things, and may compartmentalize our grief in ways we may not realize. Sharing stories can take a disengaged nurse back to the root of why they’re doing what they’re doing. This can help nurses reconnect with the emotional rewards of

bedside care; and it can also help patients realize how important they are to nurses, that they aren’t just a number.”

Because Eden has found storytelling to be as useful for routine nursing as it is for pandemic care, she believes this skill should be taught at nursing schools and in workplace professional development seminars. She also recommends the American Nurses Association’s free webinar, which was supported by a grant from the Foundation. “Stories influence generations of nurses,” she added. “What I remember most vividly from my preceptor, Gayle Fuhrman, RN, are the stories she told me that I still tell today to the nurses I precept. This is how you impact a large number of people, how you increase engagement, better your culture, and increase kindness.”

— Jessica Stein Diamond is a professional journalist who specializes in healthcare, engineering, behavioral health, education, and equity topics.

## Why stories matter

**M**ost nurses underestimate the power of their stories, according to Carolyn Jones, producer of the award-winning documentaries *In Case of Emergency*, *The American Nurse*, and *Defining Hope* (produced with support from the American Nurses Foundation).

Jones encourages nurses to, “Dig into your lives and hearts and tell your stories. Share your stories of resilience, stress, hope, and support. Your experiences will impact the future of the nursing profession.”

While filming her documentaries, Jones noticed that every nurse she approached to interview first suggested she speak with someone else instead. “Having humility is a beautiful quality. But it’s time to say ‘I have a story that people need to hear’—because you do. Nurses are standing next to patients all the time. There isn’t any room to be phony or fake. You’re present, authentic, and you care. That’s the best way to tell a story. Nurses are innately great story tellers.”

Jones’ skill-building insights are featured in “Magnify your voice—use storytelling to advance nursing,” a free webinar available via the ANA Enterprise at [tinyurl.com/y3dy7r7u](https://tinyurl.com/y3dy7r7u).

Share your story via [ANAYearofthenurse.org](https://ANAYearofthenurse.org).

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