



Agendas for change

Nursing's path for growth, diversity, and health equity

EVEN AS NURSES worldwide confront one of the gravest crises in modern times, the nursing profession keeps looking forward and planning for its future. A quartet of reports published this year points the way with key findings and concrete steps to achieve ambitious goals not only for the profession but also better health and health equity for all communities.

The reports consider in detail how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nurses and nursing. This unprecedented public health emergency has crystallized the need for novel approaches; additional funding and resources; renewed attention to the health, well-being, and professional development of nurses; and accelerated collaboration among nursing organizations and other healthcare stakeholders.

In May, the National Academy of Medicine released its much-anticipated report, *The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity* (nam.edu/publications/the-future-of-nursing-2020-2030), successor to the Institute of Medicine's highly influential 2010 report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*. The American Nurses Association (ANA), together with Johnson & Johnson and the American Organization for Nursing Leadership, published *Accelerating Nursing, Transforming Healthcare* (nursing.jnj.com/anth-research-highlights). ANA also collaborated with the Tri-Council for Nursing to issue *Transforming Together: Implications and Opportunities from the COVID-19 Pandemic for Nursing Education, Practice, and Regulation* (funded by the American Nurses Foundation) (bit.ly/3k4yUa8). In addition, the International Council of Nurses, of which ANA is a member, published *Nurses: A Voice To Lead; A Vision For Future Healthcare* (bit.ly/3xPOU4E).

Collectively, these documents give us a strong pulse of where the profession is now and a powerful prescription for where we want to go. By capturing a diversity of thought from nursing leaders like myself and nurses in a variety of settings and career stages, recurring themes emerged. This gives us confidence in the reports' findings and in the path forward.

One crucial conclusion is clear: Nurses play an essential role in advancing health equity. To bolster efforts in this regard, the reports recommend strategies such as establishing sustainable and flexible mechanisms to support nurses, embracing modern methods and technologies to deliver care, integrating determinants of health and health equity practices into nursing education, and ensuring that nurses practice to the full scope of their authority.

Nurses worldwide continue to strain under the care requirements of the pandemic, and the findings underscore the necessity of long-term support of their physical and mental health and well-being.

The reports offer strategies for building up the nursing workforce, such as bolstering the capability to manage highly effective care teams and overcoming the limitations of face-to-face education programs while also providing innovative clinical placements. Innovation, in fact, features prominently as an element of leveraging nurses' skills and capacities as change agents to achieve healthy communities and to better plan for and respond to future emergencies.

I'm pleased to say that significant work is already underway within the ANA Enterprise to align with these recommendations to shape the future of nursing practice and healthcare. From addressing racism in nursing and leveraging the power of nurse-led innovation to calling for major investments in nursing education and pursuing priority nursing practice, policy and advocacy issues, the ANA Enterprise is working actively to realize this envisioned future.

Nursing leaders are energized by these reports, which are relevant to all nurses. Our profession's pursuit of the agendas put forward will enable nurses to flourish professionally and to provide better care, regardless of the capacity in which they serve. Our patients will benefit most of all.

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