

ANA-Michigan Building Bridges in Nursing: The Power of Professional Connections and Collaborative Partnerships



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In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving healthcare landscape, nursing professionals are recognizing the critical value of building strong professional connections and engaging in collaborative partnerships. Beyond frontline care and across the continuum of care, nursing now demands active participation in interdisciplinary teams, policy development, innovation, evidence-based practice and leadership. Establishing and nurturing professional relationships is not just a benefit, it is a necessity for personal growth and advancing healthcare outcomes.

The Personal and Professional Dimensions of Connection

On a personal level, meaningful professional relationships offer nurses emotional support, mentorship, and a sense of community. Nursing practice at all levels, can be both emotionally taxing and isolating at times. Connecting with others who share similar challenges helps reduce burnout, boosts morale, and fosters resilience. These relationships often begin with shared experiences, working the same schedules, navigating a complex case, or learning from a seasoned mentor, and evolve into a professional support system that spans roles and institutions.

Professionally, connections lead to knowledge sharing, skill development, and career advancement. Whether it is attending a conference, participating in a professional organization like the American Nurses Association-Michigan, or collaborating on research or quality improvement initiatives, networking opens doors. Nurses can learn about new evidence-based practices, discover career opportunities, and gain access to resources that improve patient care as well as support work life balance.

Collaborative Partnerships: A Strategic Imperative

Collaboration is central to modern healthcare delivery. Nurses must work not only with other nurses but also with physicians, social workers, physical therapists, administrators, and community partners. These interdisciplinary partnerships lead to more holistic and effective care for patients. For example, collaborating with community health organizations can help address social determinants of health that might otherwise be overlooked in a clinical setting.

The book *Strategic Doing: Ten Skills for Agile Leadership* by Morrison, Hutcheson, Nilsen, and Fadden (2019) provides a prac-

tical framework for fostering such collaboration. The "Strategic Doing" process emphasizes starting with a clear outcome, identifying shared assets, and developing a path forward through ongoing collaboration. These principles are especially valuable in nursing, where complex problems rarely have simple solutions. Rather than relying on hierarchical, slow-moving planning models, Strategic Doing promotes rapid, flexible action driven by shared goals and mutual trust.

One key takeaway from Strategic Doing is the idea of forming "collaborative networks" rather than rigid structures. This aligns perfectly with the fluid, team-based nature of healthcare. By focusing on what each team member can contribute and iteratively building on small, measurable successes, nurses and their partners can co-create impactful solutions, actions, and innovations in real time.

The Advantages of Professional Partnerships in Nursing

Developing professional partnerships benefits not only the individuals involved but also the broader nursing profession and healthcare system. Among the advantages:

- **Enhanced patient outcomes:** Interdisciplinary teamwork leads to more comprehensive care, reduced errors, and better health outcomes.
- **Innovation and problem-solving:** Diverse perspectives lead to creative solutions, particularly when tackling complex challenges like staffing shortages, chronic disease management, or health inequities.
- **Professional growth:** Exposure to new roles, ideas, and leadership pathways fosters ongoing learning and career development.
- **Community impact:** Collaborative efforts can extend nursing's collective beyond the healthcare organizations walls, influencing public health initiatives, policy advocacy, and education.

American Nurses Association – Michigan: Focusing the Power of Michigan Nurses through Connection and Collaboration in 2025

During May ANA-Michigan celebrated the great work of many of our members and Michigan nurses as we focused on Nurses' Week. Our ANA-Michigan Foundation through its many donors recognized the great work of Michigan nurses and honored nurses within our State. We partnered with the Michigan Organization of Nursing Leaders (MONL) and the Michigan Nurs-

ing Students Association (MNSA) to offer member training in advocacy. Through our Town Hall Series we engaged in a powerful discussion about the growing and changing needs of our early career nurses as well as the soon to be licensed RN's. Through collaboration with ANA-Michigan's Early Career Taskforce we look forward to further focus on making sure that nurses who are early in their career have the support, collaboration, and opportunities to strengthen their practice and find support in mentors and connections with colleagues to help guide their way. Through a collaboration with the Office of Nursing Programs (ONP) at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), ANA-Michigan engaged in collaborative talks with nursing professional organizations across the State of Michigan.

New opportunities for connection and collaboration are upcoming as we look

forward to our upcoming ANA-Michigan Conference, Reflecting Our Nursing Identity - Navigating the Tides of Change, where we can come together to learn and grown in our nursing practices. ANA-Michigan also is excited to host the Empowered Leadership Series (ELS) which is an online development series for nurses interested in nursing leadership at all levels. This seven-week virtual course facilitated by Dr. Kari Szczechowski features nursing leaders, executives and subject matters nursing experts from around the State of Michigan and the United States. If you are looking to build your connections and find new collaborations these opportunities as well as ANA-Michigan's Podcast, Voices for Nurses, and Town Hall series are great programs to start with.

In conclusion, professional connections and collaborative partnerships are foundational to a thriving nursing career. They empower nurses personally and pro-

fessionally, contribute to patient and community well-being, and create a culture of innovation. ANA-Michigan is focused to continue building and supporting the "Power of Nursing" through offering the tools that support and connect nurses to develop their own personal and professional spheres of influence. We want to highlight the great "Power of Nursing" and equip ANA-Michigan members with the mindset and skills to connect, create collaborations, and facilitate the changes in our practice(s) and healthcare effectively, proving that through the "Power of Nursing" we can drive the transformation of healthcare and our profession by using strong, strategic relationships. ■

Reference

Morrison, E., Hutcheson, S., Nilsen, D., & Fadden, J. (2019). Strategic doing: Ten skills for agile leadership. Wiley.



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