

A Nightingale Among Us

Margaret Mulhall, President, Colorado Nurses Foundation

For the last three decades, I have had the good fortune to know Eve Hoygaard. Eve will be moving out of state soon to be closer to her relatives. Colorado nurses may not know Eve, but they should. There is no one who is a more passionate advocate for nursing. She embodies the spirit of a professional nurse. She is an excellent practitioner, but she is a voice that demands to be heard. A long-time active member of the Colorado Nurses Association, she served in many leadership roles. Her advocacy resulted in significant policy changes benefiting nurses statewide.

I met Eve as a novice member of the Colorado Nurses Foundation. With her beautiful red hair and adamant opinions, I soon

learned that Eve was a nurse's nurse. You may not have met one yet, but Eve is one. If you are a nurse, Eve was your advocate. If you were ever nominated for a Nightingale Award (we now refer to it as the Nursing Excellence Award), Eve made sure that everyone was called a recipient. There are no winners or losers. If you are nominated, you were a recipient of either a luminary award or an excellence award. Nurses are not losers! Thank You Eve, you will forever be in my heart, as one of the many mentors I have had in my nursing career. I wish you good health and a happy transition into the next phase of your life. You truly are a Nightingale among us. ■

Elevating Excellence: San Luis Valley Health Champions Nursing Certifications

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In the heart of Colorado's San Luis Valley, a quiet yet powerful revolution is underway at San Luis Valley Health. Nurses here are raising the bar — not just for themselves, but for the entire community — through professional certification. What was once a personal milestone is now a celebrated

organizational culture, backed by data, determination, and a whole lot of heart.

The San Luis Valley, sitting at approximately 7,500 feet above sea level, is one of the highest alpine valleys in the world, and is larger than the state of Connecticut. The population that is spread out over six

counties is predominately Hispanic, with deep cultural roots and a high proportion of Spanish-speaking households. Residents here face many social determinants of health challenges, including poverty, transportation, and limited health literacy.

Twenty-four nurses at San Luis Valley Health are currently board certified, demonstrating their advanced clinical knowledge and commitment to excellence in patient care. Since March of 2024, the momentum has only accelerated, with eight more nurses earning new certifications. Three additional nurses have applications approved and are preparing to sit for their exams.

SLV Health isn't just encouraging certification — they're celebrating it. In March 2025, the organization recognized certified nurses on Certified Nurses Day March 19, with staff development teams decorating lockers and hand-delivering certificates and pins to all certified nurses.

Since late 2023, SLV Health has partnered with their marketing team on a

"Nursing Through Excellence" plaque wall, showcasing every certified nurse with a personalized plaque. Throughout the year, leadership speaks at organization-wide staff meetings, explaining the "what, why, and who" of certification, and certifications are now a standing topic at Education Council meetings, ensuring it stays top of mind across departments. Another powerful tool in SLV Health's arsenal is intentional rounding, during which leaders have one-on-one conversations with staff.

Support at SLV Health is more than verbal. Nurses have access to the CertPrep

app through HealthStream, providing mobile access to review material. Flyers about the app are posted throughout the facility, and a Professional Development lecture included a dedicated section on certification resources. In addition, the Education SharePoint has been revamped to include the certification application, along with an inspiring short video from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) on why certification matters. SLV Health is also collaborating with the Opportunity Now grant program, ensuring financial support is available to those who want to

pursue certification.

According to recent statistics from the Colorado Board of Nursing, only about 30% of registered nurses across Colorado are certified in specialty areas. SLV Health's certification rate is tracking to go above that average as the organization continues to foster a culture of growth and recognition. Whether it's through plaques on the wall, decorated lockers, or a simple conversation during rounding, SLV Health is making excellence not just a goal, but a way of life. ■

Executive Summary: Ethical Concerns Regarding Integrating AI in Nursing Education

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Overview

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the way we live, and it's rapidly making its way into nursing education. The integration of AI into nursing education is starting to change how we teach and learn in nursing, making it possible to personal-

ize learning, create more realistic clinical simulations, and track student progress in new ways (Booth et al., 2021). AI refers to computer programs or machines designed to handle certain thinking tasks, like problem-solving or analyzing information, that we typically associate with

people (Yakusheva et al., 2024). While AI has been utilized in higher education since the 1950s (De Gagne, 2023), today's generative AI is far more advanced. It can recognize patterns and generate text, data, images, and other outputs based on learned information (Marr, 2023). In addition to nursing education, a significant portion of the healthcare industry is now leveraging AI, with over 85% of healthcare leaders either investing in or planning to invest in AI technologies over the next three years (Phillips Editorial Team, 2024). Ninety-four percent of healthcare companies and two out of three physicians reported using AI in some capacity within the past year (Henry, 2025). While the usage in nursing education is less known, preparing future nurses to interact safely, ethically, and effectively with AI is critical given the rate at which this technology is growing across healthcare settings.

The rapid integration of AI into nursing practice and education introduces complex ethical dilemmas that demand