

Rutgers Professor Edna Cadmus retires—but she'll keep saying “yes”

by Leslie Garisto Pfaff



If one word could define Edna Cadmus, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, it's “yes.”

Over nearly 50 years as a nurse,

Cadmus has become a highly lauded and influential leader, known for saying “yes” and stepping up when others might step back.

She retired on July 1 as clinical professor at [Rutgers School of Nursing](#) and executive director of the [New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing](#) (NJCCN). But she's not walking away from her beloved profession. “I'm not going to be just fading into the sunset,” she says.

“Dr. Cadmus has been a valued member of our faculty and a powerful champion of the nursing workforce,” says Angela Starkweather, PhD, ACNP-BC, CNRN, FAANP, FAAN, dean and professor at Rutgers School of Nursing. “She's made a lasting impact through her leadership and the relationships she's built across academia, health systems, and public policy.”

Cadmus began her career in 1976 as a staff nurse, rising to a 16-year tenure as senior vice president for patient care services at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center.

She didn't initially set out to be a leader. “People tapped me on the shoulder and shared opportunities,” she recalls. “And one of the things I did was say ‘yes.’ Over time, I recognized that leadership was my path and became passionate about changing things in health care.”

Cadmus earned a PhD in nursing to build her skills in data analysis to address

workforce challenges like nurse retention. “Even when I felt I didn't have all the skills I needed,” she says, “I knew I could obtain them through education and great mentors.”

When she joined Rutgers in 2010, Cadmus was asked to create a [graduate program in nursing leadership](#). She said “yes” again, serving over a decade as the founding specialty director, inspiring, educating, and mentoring developing nurse leaders.

In 2014, she said “yes” to taking the helm at the [NJCCN](#). The state-established center, housed at the nursing school, is a voice for nursing workforce solutions based on evidence-based data.

“Edna's contributions to nursing are unmatched,” says Senator Joseph Vitale, chair of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee. “When I needed reliable workforce information, I turned to Edna and NJCCN—and they always delivered.”

Among her signature achievements: launching a 12-month residency program for new nurses, now active at 22 New Jersey hospitals, as well as residency programs in school nursing and long-term care. Under her leadership, NJCCN earned the 2025 Excellence in Innovation Award from the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers.

Since 2010, Cadmus has co-led the New Jersey Action Campaign promoting the Future of Nursing initiative. Nationally, she co-chaired revisions to *Nursing Leadership: Scope and Standards of Practice* and served as a Pathway to Excellence commissioner.

She's secured more than \$13 million



in funding, authored over 60 publications, testified before lawmakers, and organized and presented at conferences across the U.S.

A fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, Cadmus has received numerous awards—most recently, the 2025 Exemplary Leadership Award from the American Association for Nursing Leadership.

In May, colleagues gathered at the Rutgers Club in New Brunswick to celebrate her legacy. Speakers included Sen. Vitale, who presented her with a joint legislative resolution.

Cadmus plans to stay active through consulting, mentoring, and continued advocacy—and true to form, she plans to keep saying “yes.” ■