

EDITORIAL

Advocacy and Suicide Prevention



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According to the American Nurses Association (ANA), advocacy is a pillar of nursing. Nurses instinctively advocate for their patients in their workplaces and their communities. ANA defined advocacy as “the act or process of pleading for, supporting, or recommending a cause or course of action. Advocacy may be for persons (whether as an individual, group, population, or society) or for an issue, such as potable water or global health.” ANA, 2021, p. 109). This edition features numerous articles on advocacy from various perspectives.

September is Suicide Prevention Month. Suicidal thoughts, like other mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. Suicidal thoughts often occur with untreated mental health “condition”. Although common, these thoughts should not be considered normal and should be considered a significant issue.

A study completed by Davidson and colleagues (2020) revealed that nurses have a higher risk of suicide than the general population. Suicide rates have risen worldwide, with over 800,000 people committing suicide a year. They studied a total of 1,824 nurse and 152,495 non-nurse suicides. One of the strongest characteristics associated with nurse suicide was the presence of known job problems. This could mean that workplace wellness programs centered on reducing stress in the work environment may save lives.

The nursing professional has many risk factors for suicide, and according to the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) expert panel consensus statement, the drivers of nurse suicide include:

- stigma associated with asking for and receiving information to support mental health,

- job-related stressors, and
- lack of access to mental health treatment (Wells, 2023).

An article on strategies that nurses can support or create in their organizations to help prevent suicide is included in this issue. This article highlights organizational-level evidence-based solutions that urgently need implementation to better support our nurses’ mental health.

Telephone triage demonstrates advocacy for the family members caring for their loved ones. An article on telephone triage outlines how one organization implemented a triage system to better manage pediatric patient flow. With the changing healthcare environment and increasing demand for access to care, telephone triage will continue to be an essential aspect of nursing care for patients and their families.

A bedside nurse describes advocacy for patients dealing with cancer. This article will share the story of one patient through the nurse’s lens.

In our last issue, an article on nurses and voting, focusing on political advocacy, was included. Part two of this article, which focuses on nurse advocacy beyond voting is printed in this edition. The article contains strategies for involvement in campaigning and supporting nurses running for office.

ANA-Ohio is advocating for nurses in Ohio by collaborating with other nursing organizations. The inaugural Nurse Summit was held on April 16, 2024. See the article summarizing the meeting and identifying the organizations that participated.

This issue also includes a summary of the ANA Membership Assembly

meeting held on June 27-29, 2024. Read the report to see how ANA continues to advocate for nursing. The ANA-Ohio annual meeting on September 27th and 28th (Celebrate, Collaborate, Create!) will include a poster session and the Jeri Milstead Public Policy Symposium, as well as committee reports and the ANA-Ohio business meeting. Do not miss this opportunity to see how ANA-Ohio is advocating for nursing. Don’t miss the opportunity to register for the ANA-Ohio annual meeting, the deadline is September 13. ■

References

- American Nurses Association. (2021). *Nursing: Scope and standards of practice*. (4th Ed.). Silver Spring, Md.
- Davidson, J. E., Proudfoot, J., Lee, K, Terterian, G., & Zisook, S. A longitudinal analysis of nurse suicide in the United States (2005-2016) with recommendations for action.(2020). *Worldviews on Evidence-Based Nursing* 17, 1, 6-15 <https://www.doi.org/10.1111/wvn.12419>
- Wells, S. K. (2023). Suicide among nurses: we have to talk about it. Retrieved from: <https://www.aacn.org/blog/suicide-among-nurses-we-have-to-talk-about-it>