

# Diversity in Nursing: Building an Inclusive Future

By Luis E. Caso Vega, MBA, BSN, RN, NE-BC, CEN, TCRN, CPEN (He/Him/El)

As the population in the United States continues to change, the nursing workforce must adapt to reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. According to Smiley et al. (2023), the 2022 National Nursing Workforce Survey categorically showed that 80% of registered nurses (RNs) in the United States self-identify as White/Caucasian, far above the demography across the country. Changes are noted, such as the composition of the nursing workforce, which indicates that nurses are becoming younger and more racially diverse, with increasing trends among Hispanic/Latino and male. While there has been some growth in the diversity of nurses in the US, there is a need for sustained growth to mirror the people and communities that nurses accompany in care (Hassmiller & Wakefield, 2022). Advancing diversity in nursing is an essential step toward having a nursing workforce that is prepared to provide culturally informed and safe care for all patients.

## The Importance of Diversity in Nursing

The current increase in Hispanic/Latino and male nurses is significant for several reasons. According to Stamps (2023), a diverse workforce encourages different perspectives and experiences that are conducive to working through problems or sparking innovative solutions in health care. Patients of similar cultural attributes tend to feel more understood and more satisfied with care from nurses from similar cultural backgrounds (Stamps, 2023). This relationship can ultimately improve patient outcomes due to the trust and communication necessary to assure adequate health care.

## Strategies to Foster Diversity

### Mentorship Programs

Establishing mentorship programs bridges the gap between nurses from diverse backgrounds and those who are experienced. Mentors can help nurses feel less isolated. Mentorship has been shown to increase the retention of diverse nursing talent (Oikarainen, 2022). Mentors can help recruits find their way within the complex healthcare environment, navigate the complicated healthcare system, and find meaning and fulfillment in their chosen work setting.

### Educational Workshops

Offering cultural humility and safety workshops can be used to educate the nursing workforce about how to ensure the provision of culturally informed and safe care. Such workshops should cover overcoming language barriers, cultural health practices, antiracism, and implicit biases. Becoming educated on these topics could help nurses provide inclusive, effective care.

### Inclusive Hiring Practices

Healthcare organizations should embrace inclusive hiring practices that reflect diversity in their workforce. Stamps (2023) stated that this encompasses working with minority-serving institutions and associations to increase the applicant pool. Organizations should also review their hiring practices to determine if they are advantageous or disadvantageous to specific populations. Skilled and diverse recruitment of the healthcare workforce will ensure that healthcare institutions serve the best interests of their patient population.

### Supportive Work Environment

A nurturing and supportive working environment will facilitate the retention of diverse nursing staff. According to Oikarainen (2022), this may be achieved by adopting work-life balance policies, flexible working hours, and ensuring that each nurse is valued and respected. This will lead to heightened feelings of support and increased retention of nurses in the profession.

### The Role of Nurse Leaders

Nurse leaders play a significant role in creating an inclusive culture. They should seek policies and practices that support diversity and advocate for a work environment where every nurse has a sense of belonging (Stamps, 2023). This includes unmanageable workloads, insufficient compensation, and a lack of recognition for why many nurses leave the profession (Stamps, 2023).

## Conclusion

The nursing workforce must reflect the diversity of the population they serve (Vespa et al., 2020). Though some progress has been made to increase the diversity of American nurses, there is still work to do to become a truly diverse and inclusive profession. An inclusive culture, however, needs dedicated leadership and consistent effort. A diverse nursing workforce presents its benefits as it assures the enhancement of patient care and the innovation, robustness, and adaptability of the nursing profession in the increasingly diversified and changing society. Now is the time to act, and diversity can form the focus for developing a more effective health system. ■

## References

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A proud LGBTQ+ leader with 13 years of experience in Emergency nursing. He currently serves the Tohono O'odham Nation and is a professor of Healthcare Administration at NUC University while pursuing his DNP at Nova Southeastern University. Passionate Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion advocate who serves on JEDI committees in many nursing organizations.

## PARTNERS IN NURSING

# Updates from the Florida Center for Nursing

By Rayna Letourneau, PhD, RN – Executive Director of the Florida Center for Nursing



The Florida Center for Nursing (FCN) is established to research challenges facing Florida's nurses and develop solutions to meet those challenges.

## National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers Conference

The Florida Center for Nursing offered several presentations at the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers conference in June. The national conference brought together over 250 nursing, workforce development, and health care research leaders.

Presentations by FCN Executive Director Rayna Letourneau, PhD, RN, and the FCN staff included:

Carden, A., Jimenez, A., & Letourneau, R. (2024) Charting the Change: How Florida's NCLEX Pass Rates Trend with the Next Generation of NCLEX  
Letourneau, R., Cooper, T., & Brown, T.

(2024) Shaping the Future of Nursing: An Initiative to Increase the Number of Faculty in Florida

Jimenez, A., Carden, A., & Letourneau, R. (2024) Autonomous Practice APRNs in Florida

Carden, A., Jimenez, A., & Letourneau, R. (2024) Nursing Faculty Vacancies in Florida's Pre-Licensure Nursing Programs

Speakers from the Florida Center for Nursing are available to present at events on these and other critical topics that impact the nursing workforce. Submit a speaker request here: [flcntr.org/speaker](https://flcntr.org/speaker)

## Community Engagement Tour Launches

The Florida Center for Nursing began its Community Engagement Tour in May at Indian River State College in Port St. Lucie, Florida. The Community Engagement

Tour is a series of regional workshops that allow the community to review and comment on Florida's statewide and regional nursing workforce data.

After the inaugural workshop in the Southeast region, FCN staff traveled to the Northeast, with further plans to visit the six remaining nursing regions it has designated across Florida. FCN staff will compile, analyze, and disseminate the findings and recommendations from the regional workshops after completion of the Community Engagement Tour. Regional workshops are open to the public and offered for both in-person and virtual attendance. Sign up to be notified of future dates and locations here: [flcntr.org/newsletter](https://flcntr.org/newsletter) ■