

# Unflinching Pride in Nursing while Fighting for Change



In this dynamic healthcare landscape, it is important to highlight the enduring contributions of the nursing profession while demonstrating a fierce pride for who we are. As a central pillar of our healthcare system, nurses exemplify knowledge and expertise, compassion, and resilience. However, these essential players of our profession, in every aspect, are being strained under the weight of high workloads, unsatisfactory salaries, and a lack of respect for the crucial roles they play. We must continue to call out these inequities in the midst of unrealistic expectations of performance. This is key to the safe delivery of patient care and the well-being of nurses.

Pride in nursing is not just a sentiment; it is a testament to the rigorous training, specialized knowledge, and heartfelt commitment that nurses bring to their work. From the hands-on care units, to universities and multiple care environments, nurses provide a lifeline to those they touch, often under challenging circumstances. Embracing this pride is essential, but it does not negate the urgent need for substantial changes within nursing work environments.

High workloads and staffing shortages are persistent conditions that compromise patient care, work product, and nurse well-being. Nurses routinely face burnout, long hours, inadequate support, and unreasonable expectations, which leads to errors and decreased quality of work. This is not just a professional issue; it is a health and well-being concern. Addressing these challenges requires systemic changes, including enforcing safe nurse-to-patient levels. Additionally, other

areas, such as nursing education must address the same considerations. Faculty burnout from unreasonable expectations have led to a faculty shortage nationwide which is a critical problem with an ever-worsening shortage.

Moreover, fair compensation is a fundamental aspect of professional respect and recognition. Despite the critical nature of our work, nurses often find their salaries lagging behind those of other healthcare professionals. Higher salaries are not just about financial stability; they reflect the value society places on our expertise and dedication. We must advocate for compensation that mirrors the critical nature of our roles.

Respect for nurses extends beyond salary; it encompasses how we are perceived and treated within the healthcare hierarchy. Our insights and experience should be valued in decision-making processes at all levels. Elevating the voice of nurses in policy discussions, hospital administration, and public health initiatives is essential for fostering a healthcare environment that truly respects and utilizes nursing expertise.

To achieve these goals, the nursing community must unite to engage in robust advocacy efforts. Joining professional organizations, participating in policy dialogues, seeking influential positions such as legislative leadership and key board positions are strategies that are currently underway across the country. We must also educate the public about our contributions and challenges to engage them in our advocacy for nurse-led safe patient care. We must leverage our collective voice to push for legislative changes that

ensure safer work conditions, equitable pay, and the respect we deserve.

Pride in our profession fuels the fight for a better future. As nurses, we owe it to ourselves and our patients to strive for a system that values our indispensable role in healthcare. We must stand united, with all of our diversity, proud of our profession and resolute in our advocacy for the improvements that will enable us to provide the highest standard of care. [n](#)

In the Spirit of Caring,  
Willa Fuller, RN  
Executive Director,  
Florida Nurses Association

A vertical graphic for the Florida Nurses Association (FNA). At the top, there is a photograph of four diverse healthcare professionals (three women and one man) in a clinical setting, smiling and engaged in conversation. Below the photo is a red and blue wavy banner with the FNA logo (a stylized 'F' and 'N' with a red and blue gradient) and the text 'FNA Florida Nurses Association'. The main text reads 'EMPOWER YOUR JOURNEY' in large, bold, blue letters. Below this, it says 'Start your nursing career on the right path by joining the only association that represents all nurses in the state of Florida.' At the bottom, there are three red circular icons with white symbols: a graduation cap for 'Advance Your Career', a stethoscope for 'Improve Your Practice', and a group of people for 'Belong to a Community'. The text 'Learn more at www.floridanurse.org/join' is at the very bottom.