

AI Meets Empathy: How Nurses Balance Tech and Touch

By Dr. Lois Greene RN



In 2025, nurses remain the backbone of patient advocacy, ensuring each individual's needs and rights are respected. As healthcare systems evolve to address new challenges—technological advancements, shifting patient expectations, and persistent quality gaps—advocacy has never been more crucial. Enter artificial intelligence (AI), a transformative tool enabling nurses to enhance their advocacy. Here are actionable tips to help busy nurses navigate this journey, highlighting both dos and don'ts.

DO: Embrace AI to Enhance Patient Care AI tools can help nurses identify patient needs faster and more accurately. Predictive analytics, for instance, can flag potential complications early, prompting timely interventions. Virtual health assistants offer patient education tailored to individual needs, even in multiple languages. Leveraging AI allows nurses to deliver informed, proactive advocacy and improve outcomes.

DON'T: Depend Solely on Technol-

ogy While AI offers immense potential, it cannot replace the human touch. Patients value empathy and trust, which only human interactions can provide. Technology should complement—not replace—nurses' expertise. Always critically evaluate AI recommendations and use clinical judgment to ensure care remains personalized and compassionate.

DO: Prioritize Clear Communication Effective communication is central to advocacy. Actively listen to patients, document their concerns, and explain medical conditions and procedures in plain language. By bridging the gap between complex medical jargon and patient understanding, you empower patients to make informed decisions.

DON'T: Make Assumptions About Patients' Needs Each patient's circumstances, values, and cultural backgrounds are unique. Avoid assumptions about their preferences or abilities without their input. Advocacy means honoring their autonomy and including them in care de-

isions to ensure their voices are heard.

DO: Address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Advocacy extends beyond clinical care. SDOH, like housing, food security, and transportation, significantly impact patient outcomes. Nurses can identify these factors and collaborate with community health workers, social workers and community resources to connect patients with vital services. Addressing SDOH promotes quality health care, ensuring every patient has a fair chance at optimal health.

DON'T: Overlook Burnout—Yours or Your Colleagues' Advocating for patients requires emotional resilience. Prioritize self-care and check in on colleagues.

Nursing thrives on teamwork, and simple acts of support can make a significant difference. Advocate for workplace policies that foster wellness and build a culture of mutual care to sustain a compassionate nursing community.

DO: Stay Informed and Educated Healthcare is ever-evolving, and staying current is essential. Attend workshops, pursue certifications, and join professional organizations to enhance your skills. Knowledge is power, and continuous learning strengthens your advocacy efforts.

DON'T: Neglect Collaborative Advocacy Advocacy thrives on collaboration. Partner with advance practice providers, physicians, allied health professionals, and administrative staff to ensure a unified approach to patient care. Foster an environment where everyone's voice—especially the client's—is valued.

DO: Empower Patients and Families Encourage patients to ask questions and share their preferences. Provide resources that enable them to take an active role

in their care. Advocacy means equipping patients and their families with the confidence to make informed decisions.

Conclusion In 2025, nurses' role in advocacy remains pivotal. By integrating

AI, maintaining clear communication, addressing SDOH, and fostering collaboration, nurses ensure patient-centered high quality care stays at the heart of healthcare. Advocacy is more than what

you do—it's how you approach every interaction with compassion, respect, and a drive to make a difference. Keep advocating and stay inspired! ■

ONL NJ Awards Achievements of Healthier Work Environments as Implemented by Nursing Workplace Environments and Staffing Councils (NWESC)

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The work of the Organization of Nurse Leaders New Jersey (ONL NJ) through the Nursing Workplace Environment and Staffing Councils (NWESC) continues to improve workplace environments throughout 48 hospitals in New Jersey since formation and implementation in 2019. The ONL NJ recognized the achievements of various hospitals in improving their work environments. The NWESC Commission sent out a request for workplace improvements that utilized evidenced-based practices through the work of the hospitals' NWESCs focused on the AACN six interdependent standards. (Figure 1). On October 10, 2024, a state-wide education program was held to share these accomplishments and to give awards to recognize the highest achievers in each of the six interdependent standards and for work on resiliency.

Appropriate Staffing: The impact of ADT nurses on alleviating the workload of acute care nurse (The Valley Hospital). Designated teams were utilized for the admissions of patients, their transfers to other units, and discharges in a timely manner.

Authentic Leadership: Creation of three subcommittees to address specific concerns (AHS Overlook Medical

Center) 1) "Thorns" Group: identified thorns and solutions to address things that impede workflows; 2) Night shift council: to better address specific night shift concerns; and 3) Recognition of unrecognized roles: new committee seeking input.

Effective Decision Making: Utilizing shared governance, collaborative decision making and staff autonomy in the ED. (HMH Riverview Medical Center)

Development and implementation of nurse driven protocols initiated in the ED for stroke and sepsis patients, resulting in improved outcomes.

Meaningful Recognition: Nursing Workforce Coordinator: An Innovative Role (AHS Centrastate Health System) Created and implemented a new pilot role to improve nurse well-being, satisfaction, and reduced turnover which has demonstrated improvement in nurse

Figure 1: AACN Standards for Establishing and Sustaining Healthy Work Environments (AACN 2016)

