



FUTURE OF NURSING 2020-2030: CHARTING A PATH TO ACHIEVE HEALTH EQUITY

Nurses work across diverse settings and professional levels, and serve as primary points of contact for individuals seeking care. Nurses possess critically-important capacities to lead teams and bridge clinical care, public health, and social services. The current report is aligned with the vision from the Committee on the Future of Nursing 2020–2030 and emphasizes the pivotal role of nurses in achieving health equity in the United States through enhanced capacity and expertise. The Committee envisions nurses actively participating in aligning public health, healthcare, social services, and policies to eliminate disparities and attain health equity. The current report focuses on the American healthcare system, but select chapters appear relevant to the Canadian healthcare context.

Overview of Select Chapters

Chapter 2: Social Determinants of Health and Health Equity – Presents information about the relationship between health inequities and social determinants of health. The presentation allows readers to understand the context, and respective challenges nurses face on the job.

Chapter 5: The Role of Nurses in Improving Health Equity – Highlights nurses' vital role in addressing SDOH and social needs, exploring their potential future responsibilities, and provides specific examples. The chapter succinctly outlines four key approaches: 1) addressing social needs in clinical settings; 2) tackling SDOH and social needs in communities; 3) collaborating across disciplines; and, 4) advocating for policy change. The chapter concludes by examining the opportunities and obstacles tied to each approach, emphasizing benefits of transforming institutions, and advocating for interventions influencing health outcomes.

Chapter 7: Educating Nurses for the Future - Describes changes in education that could help prepare and engage the nursing profession to address disparities and contribute to achieving equity in health and health care.

Chapter 8: Nurses in Disaster Preparedness and Public Health Emergency Response - Highlights nurses' contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic and historical events, detailing the impact of natural disasters and public health emergencies on social determinants of health and health equity. The chapter showcases systemic challenges faced by nurses in these situations, underscoring opportunities for bold changes in nursing education, practice, and policy across healthcare and public health systems to fortify and safeguard the nursing profession.

Chapter 9: Nurses Leading Change - Presents the systemic challenges faced by nurses in everyday environments and emergency situations, underscoring that nurses are in positions of leadership and can promote community health, advocate for systems change and health policy, foster the redesign of nursing education, and advance efforts to achieve health equity.

Chapter 10: Supporting the Health and Professional Well-being of Nurses – Describes the importance of supporting nurses' wellbeing as they take on new roles and challenges to meet evolving needs. The chapter identifies challenges that nurses experience and provides possible solutions that organizations can use to support nurses on the individual level and larger, systems-level approaches to target problem areas.

Chapter 11: The Future of Nursing: Recommendations and Research Priorities - Highlights the key messages and perspectives for the future from the Committee on the Future of Nursing 2020–2030 in the form of recommendations and research priorities.

Desired Outcome between 2020-2030

The authors of the current report believe that the following outcomes will appropriately prepare nurses for current and future occupational demands while simultaneously improving health equity and social determinants of health within the population.

- **Challenge Preparedness:** Ready to address issues associated with an aging population, limited access to primary care, mental health concerns, structural racism, maternal mortality, and populations that carry a disproportionate disease burden.
- **Versatile Training:** Equipped to work independently, in teams, or collaboratively across various sectors.



- **Preventive, Customized Care:** Nurses are enabled and encouraged to identify the root causes of poor health using a broad spectrum of factors. After identifying the patient's medical and social needs and considering each unique situation, nurses are empowered by the healthcare system to practice proactive care and create specialized care plans.
- **Representative Staff:** Nurses reflect the people and communities served throughout the nation.
- **Cultural Competence:** Capable of delivering culturally competent and equitable healthcare to individuals and communities.
- **Barrier Removal:** Advocating for the elimination of barriers restricting nurses from fully utilizing their education and training.
- **Equitable Compensation:** Ensuring fair reimbursement for undercompensated practice settings, such as public health nursing.
- **Emergency Training:** Establishing processes and opportunities for nurses to gain expertise, particularly in critical areas like public health emergencies and disasters, thereby enabling effective crisis response.
- **Shared Agenda:** Nursing organizations should collaborate to develop and implement a shared agenda focused on achieving substantial and measurable improvements in health equity.
- **Health Equity Lens:** The ability to integrate a health equity perspective in the daily work environment. This perspective is acquired during initial education and continuous learning.
- **Self-Care Advocacy:** Prioritizing self-care and advocating for nurse wellbeing in educational and employment settings using evidence-based strategies.

Recommendations

The authors of the current report included recommendations to achieve the outcomes listed above.

- National nursing organizations should collaboratively establish a shared agenda addressing social determinants of health and promoting health equity. This agenda should outline priorities in nursing practice, education, leadership, and health policy engagement, with identified expertise shared among organizations. Supported by government, payers, healthcare entities, and foundations, the agenda's implementation should include defined timelines and metrics for impact measurement.
- Government agencies, healthcare organizations, payers, and foundations should take substantial actions to empower the nursing workforce for a comprehensive approach to addressing social determinants of health and promoting health equity, regardless of practice settings.
- Nursing education programs, employers, leaders, licensing boards, and organizations should implement structures, systems, and evidence-based interventions to enhance nurses' health and wellbeing, particularly as they take on new roles to advance health equity.
- All organizations, including state and federal entities and employers, should enable nurses to practice fully by removing barriers that hinder their ability to address social needs, social determinants of health, and enhance healthcare access, quality, and value. Barriers include regulatory, payment limitations, restrictive policies, and legal and professional impediments.
- To empower nurses in addressing community inequities during public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate-related disasters, federal agencies and key stakeholders should fortify and safeguard the nursing workforce.
- Major healthcare associations and foundations should gather representatives from nursing, public health, and healthcare to develop and support a research agenda on the impact of nursing interventions, including multisector collaboration, on social determinants of health, environmental health, health equity, and nurses' wellbeing.

Focus Pages

Throughout the current report, some sections provide information that may be particularly interesting or relevant.

- P. 2: Achieving Health Equity Through Nursing: Desired Outcomes
- P. 13-14: The Committee's Recommendations
- P. 33: Social Determinants of Health
- P. 92-93: Agenda for Nursing Health Services Research
- P. 203: Domains for Nursing Education & Competencies for Nursing Education, Depending on Preparation Level
- P. 250: FIGURE 8-1 Disaster nursing timeline
- P. 279: TABEL 9-1 A Framework for Nurse Leadership
- P. 307: BOX 10-2 A Snapshot of the Physical Health of American Nurses
- P. 309: BOX 10-3 COVID-19 and Nurses' Health and Well-Being
- P. 332: BOX 10-6 Psychological Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- P. 356-357: BOX 11-1 Achieving Health Equity Through Nursing: Desired Outcomes
- P. 373-375: TABLE 11-1 Research Topics for the Future of Nursing, 2020–2030

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