

A Call to Action for Academic Nurse Leaders to Promote Practices to Enhance Optimal Well-being, Resilience and Suicide Prevention in Schools of Nursing across the U.S.

Whereas as the largest group of health care professionals, the optimal health and well-being of nurses are critical to influencing the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities and systems;

Whereas resiliency and healthy lifestyle behaviors are known to prevent the development of chronic conditions, including mental health disorders;

Whereas the American Nurses Association declares a “Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation” social movement for action knowing that nurses are 2.8 times more stressed than the American public;

Whereas nurse suicide rates are now higher than the general population in the United States (males = 33/100,000 vs 27/100,000; females = 10/100,000 vs 7/100,000);

Whereas the emergence of workplace burnout and distress for health professionals, including increased clinical demands, inadequate patient-staffing ratios, prolonged shift hours, poorly functioning teams, role ambiguity, reimbursement issues, and inefficiency of electronic health records, is at an epic high and pose additional health issues and concerns;

Whereas workforce stress and nurses’ physical and mental health are linked to medical errors and safety hazards;

Whereas the American College Health Association reports that 45% of college students stated they felt so depressed it was difficult to function, 66% reported overwhelming anxiety and 13.3% seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months;

Whereas suicide is the second leading cause of death in students with 1100 students taking their lives on college campuses every year;

Whereas stress and mental health challenges among students, their lack of adequate knowledge about resources for help and stigma negatively impact their ability for academic and/or clinical success;

Whereas the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-being and Resilience recommends creating positive working and learning environments for eliminating clinical burnout and enhancing professional well-being;

Whereas studies support that evidence-based interventions, such as mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral therapy/skills building interventions, improve mental health, resiliency and well-being;

Be it resolved that the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) encourages schools to take action to promote the mental health, physical health, healthy lifestyle behaviors and well-being of students, faculty and staff. This includes schools of nursing moving from crisis intervention to prevention by: building wellness cultures; offering mental health screenings or providing access to them at their supporting institutions; conducting wellness, healthy lifestyle and resiliency programming; and implementing evidence-based interventions to prevent and intervene early for depression, anxiety and stress in order to support a healthy working and living environment for all students, staff, and faculty.

And, be it further resolved that deans of colleges and schools of nursing provide leadership to advocate for and assist in the implementation of policies that meet the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics for “Duty to Self and Duty to Others,” uphold the AACN Essentials for well-being and resilience competencies and promote the health and wellbeing of all students, staff, and faculty.

The resolution was brought forward for consideration by nursing school deans, including **Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Vice President for Health Promotion, University Chief Wellness Officer, and Dean and Professor, College of Nursing, The Ohio State University, **Janie Heath**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean and Warwick Professor of Nursing, College of Nursing, University of Kentucky, College of Nursing, **Greer Glazer**, RN, CNP, PhD, FAAN, Dean and Schmidlapp Professor of Nursing, University of Cincinnati College of Nursing, **Randolph F.R. Rasch**, PhD, RN, FAANP, FNAP, Dean and Professor, College of Nursing, Michigan State University, **Linda D. Scott**, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FNAP, FAAN, Dean and Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing, **Usha Menon**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Interim Dean, University of South Florida College of Nursing, **Meredith (Wallace) Kazer**, PhD, CNL, APRN, AGPCNP- BC, FAAN, Dean and Professor, School of Nursing, Fairfield University, **Laurie A. Badzek**, LLM, JD, MS, RN, FAAN, Dean and Professor Penn State College of Nursing, **Mario R. Ortiz**, Dean and Professor, Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Binghamton University, **Jeanette O. Andrews**, PhD, RN, FAAN, Dean and Helen Gurley Wolford Professor of Nursing, College of Nursing, University of South Carolina, **Robin P. Newhouse**, PhD, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, Dean, Indiana University School of Nursing, Distinguished Professor and Deputy Chair, University Clinical Affairs Cabinet, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, IU Health