



Hispanic Nurses Leading Policy Change from the Border to the Bedside

WHO WE ARE

The National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 with a mission to ensure high-quality healthcare delivery to Hispanic communities and to foster professional excellence among bilingual and bicultural nurses. With over 40 chapters & 3,000 members, NAHN stands as the leading professional society for Latino nurses in the United States.

Our mission is to champion healthcare policies that enhance the health and well-being of the Hispanic community.

Based on the most recent available data, 5.2 million registered nurses in the United States

•Hispanic nurses account for 9%

Based on the most recent available data, Hispanic population in US estimated at 68 million

•Hispanics represent 21% of the total US population

Why Policy Matters

NAHN's commitment to policy is rooted in the Code of Ethics for Nurses, emphasizing the promotion of social justice, dignity, fairness, eliminating health inequities, and facilitating human flourishing. Provision 9 underscores the role of nurses and their organizations in enacting and resourcing practices, policies, and legislation to create a good and healthy society.

OUR CALL TO ACTION FOR WASHINGTON

Effective policy and strong implementation are essential to ensuring timely access to the full scope of nursing services and eliminating barriers to care. By prioritizing these issues, Congress can strengthen our nation's health and support the nursing workforce that serves every community.

Nurses are central to community health, innovation, and high-quality care. As the 119th Congress convenes, we reaffirm our commitment to patient-centered care and evidence-based reform, including our concern regarding the proposed elimination of the **National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)**, which plays a critical role in advancing nursing science and practice.

We urge Congress to reauthorize and fund the **Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs** from FY 2026 through FY 2030 (S.187/H.R. 3593). Last reauthorized in the 116th Congress, these programs strengthen the nursing pipeline through scholarships, loan repayment, and preparation of advanced practice nurses and future faculty.

Continued support for NINR remains essential. Its holistic, translational research addresses health within the context of individuals, families, and communities and generates practical solutions across the continuum of prevention.

Additionally, we support policies that improve maternal, veterans', and mental health; protect nurses from workplace violence; ensure responsible use of artificial intelligence in patient care; advance humane immigration policy; and promote environmental justice to reduce preventable health disparities.

Together, these priorities reflect a unified approach to strengthening the health of our nation and supporting the nursing workforce essential to every community.

NAHN urges the 119th Congress to support legislation such as:

Health Equity and Access to Care				
Support S. 547	Support H.R. 1317	Support S. 131/H.R. 392	Support S. 1709	Support S. 750
Support S. 1482	Support H.R. 2234	Support S. 1534	Support H.Res. 757	Support H.R. 3170
Support H.R. 4231/S.1973				
Immigration Policy and Health				
Support S. 2759/ H.R. 5283	Support S. 2212	Support H.R. 1589	Support H.R. 6305	
Environmental Health				
Support H.R. 903/S. 341	Support H.R. 1553	Support S. 1232/H.R. 2531	Support H.R. 3110	Support H.R. 2995

HEALTH EQUITY AND ACCESS TO CARE

Healthy People 2030 defines health equity as the achievement of the highest possible level of health for all individuals. Yet despite ongoing efforts, inequities in healthcare access, insurance coverage, and provider availability continue to widen. Nursing shortages, an overextended healthcare system, and persistent social determinants of health place a disproportionate burden on Hispanic communities and rural populations. Strengthening the healthcare and nursing workforce is crucial to reducing these disparities and improving national health outcomes in 2026 and beyond.

Why does this topic matter:

Health inequities contribute to preventable illness, poor maternal outcomes, delayed mental health treatment, and significant financial strain on families and the healthcare system. Ensuring equitable access to care—supported by a well-trained, culturally competent healthcare and nursing workforce—is vital to promoting a healthier population and strengthening the nation's economic stability.

How does this topic affect the Hispanic community and nurses in the United States?

Health inequities disproportionately impact the Hispanic community, which faces higher barriers to accessing timely and affordable care. Contributing factors include limited insurance coverage, language barriers, shortages of bilingual or culturally competent providers, and fewer healthcare facilities in predominantly Hispanic or rural areas. These challenges can lead to delayed diagnoses, higher rates of chronic disease complications, and disparities in maternal and mental health outcomes.

For nurses, these inequities intensify workforce strains. Nurses often serve as primary points of care in underserved communities, which increases workload, stress, and burnout. They may also face challenges related to caring for linguistically diverse populations without adequate institutional support or training. Strengthening the nursing workforce—not only in numbers but also in cultural and linguistic competence—is essential to reducing disparities and improving the quality of care for Hispanic individuals and other underserved groups.

1. Gaps in Access to Care

- **27.2 million people** (8.2%) remain uninsured (2024).
- **35% of U.S. counties** are maternity care deserts with no obstetric services.
- More than **60 million adults** experienced mental illness in recent years, over half do not receive treatment.

2. Impact on Hispanic/Latino Communities

- **68 million Hispanic/Latino individuals** represent **21%** of the U.S. population—the largest minority group.
- Highest uninsured rate: **24%**, compared to the national average of **8.2%**.
- Significant barriers include limited English proficiency, a shortage of culturally competent providers, and reduced access to mental health care.
- Higher chronic disease burden:
 - a. Hispanic adults are **1.1× more likely** to be obese
 - b. Hispanic children are **1.7× more likely** to have obesity than white children

3. Nursing Workforce Shortages

Nurses face staffing shortages, burnout, and limited capacity for clinical training. Without targeted federal support, shortages will continue to worsen access disparities—especially in rural and underserved communities.

- 5.6 million Registered Nurses in the U.S.
- 385,000 Nurse Practitioners (NPs)
- Nurses are the largest segment of the healthcare workforce
- Nursing provides most of the hospital and long-term care in the nation
- Only 9% of RNs identify as Hispanic

We urge Congress to support the following:

- **Support S. 750** Protecting Rural Seniors' Access to Care Act: Strengthens provider availability in rural communities and establishes an advisory panel on the nursing home workforce.

- [Support S. 547](#) Train More Nurses Act: Requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Labor to conduct a study and issue a report to grant programs to support the nursing workforce.
- [Support H.R. 1317](#) Improving Care and Access to Nurses (I CAN) Act: To amend titles XVII and XIX of the Social Security Act to increase access to services provided by Advanced Practice Registered Nurses under the Medicare and Medicaid Program.
- [Support S. 131](#) / [H.R. 392](#) Establishes a federal tax credit for nurses who serve as preceptors for nursing students, APRN students, or newly hired nurses. By incentivizing nurses to provide hands-on clinical mentoring, the bill aims to increase the number of qualified preceptors and strengthen clinical training opportunities, helping to address the nursing workforce pipeline.
- [Support S. 1482](#) National Nurse Workforce Center Act of 2025: To amend the Public Health Service Act to support and stabilize the existing nursing workforce and establish programs to increase the number of nurses.
- [Support S. 1709](#) Nursing Staffing Standards for Hospital Patient Safety and Quality Care Act: To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish safer nurse-to-patient staffing ratios in hospitals.
- [Support H.R. 4231/S. 1973](#) Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2025: To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coordination of programs to prevent and treat obesity.
- [Support S. 1534](#) Women and Underrepresented Minorities in STEM Booster Act of 2025: To increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.
- [Support H.R. 2234](#) Ensuring Veterans' Timely Access to Anesthesia Care Act of 2025: Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update certain standards regarding Anesthesia and Pain management services in the Veterans Health Administration. Direct VA to update internal practice standards to recognize CRNAs as independent practitioners consistent with Defense Health Agency standards.
- [Support H.Res. 757](#) Expressing support for the designation of September 22, 2025, as "National Hispanic Nurses Day" and recognizing the National Association of Hispanic Nurses as the leading organization representing and advocating for Hispanic Nurses.
- [Support H.R. 3170](#) Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act: Would allow nurse practitioners and physician assistants to be eligible providers for injured federal workers, enabling them to provide, diagnose, and certify medical care within the scope of their practice as defined by state law.

IMMIGRATION POLICY AND HEALTH

As nurses and healthcare professionals committed to health equity and the well-being of all people—especially immigrant and Hispanic communities—we support immigration reform that upholds human dignity and civil rights. We advocate for policies that protect the safety and rights of all individuals, regardless of immigration status, and that are grounded in scientific evidence while addressing the social and political determinants of health.

Expanding access to healthcare, investing in culturally competent services, and addressing health disparities at their roots are essential steps toward creating a more equitable healthcare system for all Americans. NAHN continues to champion compassionate, evidence-based immigration policies that prioritize the health, safety, and well-being of Hispanic communities.

How does this topic affect the Hispanic community and nurses in the United States?

- Reduces barriers to healthcare access for immigrant and Hispanic populations.
- Strengthens the healthcare workforce through fair and equitable immigration policies.
- Promotes culturally competent care and advances efforts to address social determinants of health.

We urge Congress to support the following bills:

- [Support S.2759/H.R. 5283](#) Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act: Strengthen the nurse and physician workforce by recapturing unused immigrant visas to help improve access to care in underserved communities.



- **[Support S. 2212](#)** Visible Identification Standards for Immigration-Based Law Enforcement Act of 2025 (VISIBLE) ACT: Requires all immigration enforcement officers to display visible identification during public-facing immigration enforcement actions and to promote transparency and accountability.
- **[Support H.R. 1589](#)** American Dream and Promise Act of 2025: Provides a pathway to lawful permanent resident status and eventual citizenship for eligible immigrant youth (Dreamers) and certain TPS/DED holders while protecting their ability to live, work, and pursue education.
- **[Support H.R. 6305](#)** High-skilled Immigration Reform for Employment Act: Amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to expand availability of H-1B visas for skilled professionals, including healthcare workers.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Globally, nearly half a million people die each year due to extreme heat. According to the Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5) and the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), even with significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and increased adaptation efforts, climate-related risks in the United States are projected to intensify in the years ahead.

Key findings from these reports include:

- Climate change negatively affects physical, mental, spiritual, and community health and well-being.
- It exacerbates long-standing social inequities in underserved and overburdened communities, creating persistent disparities in access to resources needed for preparation, response, and recovery.
- Low-income communities and communities of color face higher risks of illness and death from extreme heat, climate-driven flooding, and air pollution compared with White populations.

How does this topic affect the Hispanic community and nurses in the United States?

- **High exposure to extreme weather:** According to the Pew Research Center, 56% of U.S. Hispanics live in areas that experienced an extreme weather event within the past year.
- **Disproportionate environmental burdens:** Low-income communities of color—including many Hispanic neighborhoods—experience higher exposure to methane and gas emissions, extreme heat, and climate-related natural disasters.
- **Elevated climate-related health risks:** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that Latinos are 43% more likely than non-Hispanic White populations to live in areas where extreme temperatures are expected to cause significant future reductions in labor hours and increased traffic delays due to high-tide flooding. The EPA also finds that Hispanic/Latino children are projected to experience the largest increase in asthma diagnoses driven by climate-related changes in particulate matter (PM).
- **Occupational vulnerability:** The National Center for Farmworker Health estimates there are approximately 2.9 million agricultural workers in the U.S., with 80% self-identifying as Latino. Hispanic workers are overrepresented in climate-vulnerable industries such as agriculture, tourism, landscaping, construction, and other outdoor labor.
- **Heightened risk of heat-related illness:** Safe working conditions are a basic human right, yet excessive heat exposure remains one of the most serious threats facing workers. Outdoor workers are 35 times more likely than indoor workers to die from heat-related illness. Latino workers are three times more likely to die from heat exposure on the job than non-Latino workers.

We urge Congress to support the following bills:

- **[Support H.R. 903/S. 341](#)** Smoke and Heat Ready Communities Act of 2025: To amend the Clean Air Act to establish a grant program for supporting local communities in detecting, preparing for, communicating about, or mitigating the environmental and public health impacts of wildfire smoke and extreme heat.
- **[Support H.R. 1553](#)** Empowering and Enforcing Environmental Justice Act of 2025: This bill would establish an Office of Environmental Justice at the U.S. Department of Justice, authorize grants to strengthen environmental law enforcement in underserved communities, improve coordination of environmental justice matters across agencies, and empower communities with meaningful participation in decisions affecting their environment and health.
- **[Support S. 1232/H.R. 2531](#)** Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Services Workers Act: To direct the Secretary of Labor to issue an occupational safety and health standard that requires covered employers within the

health care and social service industries to develop and implement a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan.

- **Support H.R. 3110** PFAS- Free Procurement Act of 2025: To prohibit the procurement of certain items containing perfluorooctane sulfonate or perfluorooctanoic acid and prioritizing the procurement of products not containing FAS.
- **Support H.R. 2995** Protection from Cumulative Emissions and Underenforcement of Environmental Law Act of 2025: direct the Environmental Protection Agency to develop and implement a cumulative risk assessment protocol and target environmental justice communities with disproportionate exposure to pollution for analysis and corrective measures, strengthening enforcement planning and protections for overburdened communities.

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