



Latinos United Through Advocacy: Elevating our voice to advance Hispanic health, wellness, and equity in our communities.

Who We Are:

The National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) is excited to lead a national coalition consisting of Hispanic focused health care professionals who advocate for the advancement of health care policies that promote the health and well-being of the 62.6 million Latinos in the U.S. Together, we represent over 350,000 Hispanic health care professionals in the country.

Purpose:

We're requesting this meeting to discuss priority topics and policies that impact the Hispanic health care workforce and the diverse communities we serve.

Legislative Priorities – Our Call to Action for Washington:

1. Access to Health Care

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- **Support HR 3069:** To Amend title XI of the Social Security Act to Improve access to care for all Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries by testing payment models that address the social determinants of health and health disparities, particularly with respect to minorities, underserved areas, and high-risk individuals.
- **Support H.R. 1638:** Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2023 by increasing the Medicare reimbursement rate for clinical social worker services.
- **Support S. 1001:** Telehealth Expansion Act of 2023 will not disqualify a high deductible plan from providing services through telehealth or remote care; thereby, encouraging telehealth services.
- **Support H.R. 3768:** Midwives for Moms Act of 2023: To address maternity care shortages and promote optimal maternity outcomes by expanding educational opportunities for midwives, and for other purposes.
- **Support H.R.4818:** Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2023 expands Medicare coverage of intensive behavioral therapy for obesity and allows coverage under Medicare's prescription drug benefit of drugs used for the treatment of obesity or for weight loss management for individuals who are overweight.
- **Support H.R. 2713:** I CAN Act: To amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to increase access to services provided by advanced practice registered nurses under the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes.
- **Support S. 652/H.R. 2630:** SAFE STEP ACT: To improve step therapy protocols and ensure patients can safely and efficiently access the best treatment for them.

2. America's Health Care Workforce

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- **Support H.R. 3731:** Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act of 2023~To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to reduce barriers to immigrants becoming nurses or allied health professionals in the United States, and for other purposes.
- **Support S. 1113:** Nurse Staffing Standards for Hospital Patient Safety and Quality Care Act of 2023~A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish direct care registered nurse-to-patient staffing ratio requirements in hospitals, and for other purposes.
- **Support FY 2024 spending package** of at least \$302.472 million for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. 296 et seq.]) and at least \$197.693 million for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR), as outlined in the Senate Appropriations Committee passed bill.

3. Climate Effects on Health

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- **Support H.R. 245:** Breath of Fresh Air Act: To establish a grant program for nebulizers in elementary and secondary schools.
- **Support H.R. 4579:** Fairness for Farm Workers Act: To amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide increased labor law protections for agricultural workers, and for other purposes.

References & Resources – Page 5 & Addition Information can be found here: <https://www.nahnnet.org/Summit>



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

According to Healthy People 2020, access to healthcare encompasses the ability to enter the health care system through health insurance, geographic availability, and access to a health care provider. Access to comprehensive, quality healthcare services is important for promoting and maintaining health, preventing, and managing disease, reducing unnecessary disability and premature death, and achieving health equity for all Americans. With the continued aging population, projected physician shortages, increase in the prevalence of chronic disease and the number of uninsured Americans, access to health remains a leading policy issue. Since 1967, non-physician providers such as Physician Assistants (PAs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) have been utilized to improve access and reduce health care costs. Attaining good access to care means having:

- Access to providers
- Health insurance that facilitates timely access and entry into the healthcare system
- A usual source of care with whom the patient can develop a relationship.
- Access to affordable medications and treatments

Why does this topic matter:

- In 2022, 27.6 million people of all ages (8.4%) were uninsured.
- Millions of Americans experience conditions including obesity, mental health conditions, diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases each year, and the number of people seeking care is trending upward.
- Areas with low or no access to maternal care affect over 5.6 million women and nearly 350,000 births across the U.S.
- As of 2023, all states and territories had an obesity prevalence higher than 20% (more than 1 in 5 adults) predisposing to higher disease risk/burden, disability, morbidity/mortality, and higher health care costs.
- Over 50 million Americans (21% of adults) are experiencing a mental illness.
 - 42% could not afford to access treatment.
 - 10% of youth covered by private insurance did not have access to mental health services in 2022.
 - Shortage of Mental health providers

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

- Of all ethnic and racial groups, Hispanics adults represent the highest uninsured populations at 27.6% (1 in 4 Hispanic adults ages 18–64 (25.0%) lacked health insurance in the first quarter of 2023).
- 18.4 % of Hispanic/Latinos experience mental health conditions.
- Hispanic Americans are 1.2 times more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic whites and at higher risk to develop complications associated with obesity & Hispanic children were 1.8 times more likely to be obese as compared to non-Hispanic white children (Minority Health HHS).
- Patients and families with limited English proficiency (LEP) face barriers to health care service access, experience lower quality care, and suffer worse health outcomes. LEP is an independent driver of health disparities and exacerbates other social determinants of health.
- Hispanics are under-represented in healthcare which contributes to lack of culturally centered care and communication barriers in patients with LEP.

What do we recommend Washington do to change/address this gap?

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- [Support H.R. 1638](#): Improving Access to Mental Health Act of 2023 by increasing the Medicare reimbursement rate for clinical social worker services.
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AMERICA'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) the demand for RNs will increase by 6% by 2032, illustrating an employment change of 177,400 nurses. Further, the demand for most APRNs is expected to grow by 38%, illustrating an employment change of 177,400 nurses. In addition, the demand for APRNs is expected to grow by 38%. As the largest segment of the health care profession, nursing is involved at every point of care. Causes of projected shortage include:

- A shortage of nursing school faculty is restricting nursing program enrollments.
- A significant segment of the nursing workforce is nearing retirement age.
- Changing demographics signal a need for more nurses to care for our aging population.
- Amplified by the pandemic, insufficient staffing is raising the stress level of nurses, impacting job satisfaction, and driving many nurses to leave the profession.

Establishing minimum staffing standards ensures improving patient care outcomes in the U.S. (ANA, 2023), who ranks last among seven industrialized countries when it comes to measures of quality, efficiency, access, and equity (Commonwealth Fund). A 2009 study estimated that adding 133,000 RNs to the U.S. hospital workforce—the number of RNs needed to increase nursing staff to the 75th percentile— would produce medical savings of \$6.1 billion, not including the value of increased productivity when nurses help patients recover more quickly (Dall, 2009).

Why does this topic matter:

Scientific studies point to the connection between adequate levels of registered nurse staffing and safe patient care. Insufficient nurse staffing is associated with:

- Nurse burnout.
- Higher rates of poor outcomes.
- Increased patient mortality rates by 7% (JAMA, Aiken et. Al, 1987.
- Lack of access to providers and timely care.

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

While representing 18.9% of the population, Hispanics are under-represented in the health Professions (10.2% registered nurses, 7% physicians, and 9% overall). Lack of representation in health Professions: Impacts cultural understanding and communication with patients with limited English proficiency (Social determinant of health), can result in errors, omissions, and misunderstandings and contributes to poor outcomes, increased mortality, and higher health care expenditures. According to Jha, et al., 20028) hospitals that disproportionately care for Hispanics are:

- Likely to be for profit.
- Less likely to have medical or cardiac ICUs.
- Have much lower nurse staffing levels.
- Lower patient outcome performance in the areas of CHF, acute MI, and pneumonia.

What do we recommend Washington do to change/address this gap?

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CLIMATE EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes climate change as “the single biggest health threat facing humanity” (WHO, 2021). Climate change is a critical public health issue that requires action to mitigate its impact on human health and well-being. Health professionals are called upon to address the multiple health consequences of environmental degradation, extreme weather events, and other climate-related health impacts with evidence-based mitigation and adaptation actions, programs, and policies”. In a 2018 policy statement, the American Academy of Nursing noted that nurses play essential roles in public health and emergency services, and through this work, they can respond to and reduce health consequences of climate change (Leffers & Butterfield, 2018).

([American Nurses Association Position Statement, 2023](#)).

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

While Hispanics represent 62.1 million people or 18.9% of the population, they are:

- Disproportionately affected by poor air quality and unsafe water.
- More likely to be subject to climate-related changes to heat indexes.
- Suffering from heat-related diseases and mortality. According to the CDC, safe and health-promoting foods are scarce, and Hispanics/Latinos have a 40% higher chance of developing type 2 diabetes.
- Hispanic children are twice as likely to die of asthma (Chicas et al, 2019, Sarruja et al, 2022), Climate Health Leadership & Advocacy Training Workshop, 2023).

What do we recommend Washington do to change/address this gap?

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- [Support H.R. 4579](#): Fairness for Farm Workers Act: To amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide increased labor law protections for agricultural workers, and for other purposes.



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