

**WNA Dialogue Forum Topic #2**  
**Submitted by the WNA Board of Directors**

**Title:** Preparing nurses to respond to public health emergencies through a health disparities lens.

**Purpose:**

The Wisconsin Nurses Association and the Wisconsin Center for Nursing is interested in partnering to advance preparing nurses to respond to disasters in public health emergencies\*

**Objectives:**

1. Identify key elements of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) Future of Nursing 2020 - 2030 Report: Responding to disasters and public health emergencies
2. Describe evidence-based practice for nurses that addresses public health emergencies among vulnerable populations
3. Prepare and support the nursing workforce ability to respond to disasters and Public Health emergencies using a health disparities lens.

**Outcomes:** (Action strategies will be developed and voted on by the WNA members attending the Jan 21,2022 WNA Annual Meeting.)

1. Support the education of nurses to respond to disaster and public health emergencies.
2. Assist nurses to address public health preparedness that disproportionately impact vulnerable populations.

\*National Academy of Medicine (NAM), Future of Nursing 2020-2030 report, Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity (Recommendation 8) <https://www.nap.edu/read/25982/chapter/10>

**Rationale for supporting this issue**

According to the National Academy of Medicine Report, The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity, the nursing workforce would benefit from education, preparation, and tools that supports the ability to respond to disasters and public health emergencies, including knowledge about communities with significant health disparities and inequities.<sup>1</sup> The Wisconsin 2020 RN Workforce Survey Report noted that only 20% of nurses received Incident Command System training and 35.8% of nurses reported participating in an emergency preparedness exercise. The experience of applying these skills within the context of communities with health disparities lens was not measured.<sup>2</sup> What became evident during this COVID-19 public health crisis that throughout Wisconsin,<sup>3</sup> there are underlying health and social inequities that put many racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick, having more severe illness, and dying from COVID-19. Racial and ethnic minority groups are also unequally affected by unintended economic, social, and secondary health consequences of COVID-19 mitigation strategies.<sup>4</sup> Supporting nurses' knowledge in public health and emergency preparedness using a health equity lens can positively impact of the health of communities with a high proportion of vulnerable populations.

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<sup>1</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press .  
<https://www.nap.edu/read/25982/chapter/10>

<sup>2</sup> Zahner, S. J., Kowalkowski, J., Henriques, J., LeClair, J., Merss, K. B., & Cho, H. (2021). Wisconsin 2020 RN workforce survey report. Wisconsin Center for Nursing: <https://wicenterfornursing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/3481230-MAN-929008-COMBINED.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Department of Health Services. 2021. COVID-19: Racial and Ethnic Disparities. Madison, WI: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/disparities.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention. 2020. Introduction to COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. Washington, D.C.: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/racial-ethnic-disparities/index.html>