

2023 WNA Actions for Supporting Diversity, Inclusion and Equity within the Nursing Profession

Overview

At the 2020 ANA Membership Assembly there was approval of the statement, Racial Justice for Communities of Color. This pledge was as follows:

- “Oppose and address all forms of racism and discrimination.
- Condemn brutality by law enforcement and all acts of violence.
- Champion the Code of Ethics for Nurses which calls on us to recognize human dignity regardless of race, culture, creed, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, age, experience, or any aspect of identity.
- In partnership with nurses everywhere educate, advocate, and collaborate to end systemic racism, particularly within nursing.
- Advance institutional and legislative policies that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice for all.
- Advocate for the ending of health inequities within communities and health care systems that stem from systemic racism.
- Promote deliberate and respectful dialogue, effective listening, and commitment to change as a means to improve the health of all individuals and the communities where they live and work.” (Racial Justice for Communities of Color, June 20, 2020).

This served as the catalyst for ANA to embark in a review of their history and identify the current realities of being a nurse of color. In January 2021, ANA partnered with the National Commission to Address Racism that included the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA), National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurse Associations (NCEMNA), and National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) to support a visible and viable initiative to address racism in nursing.

Part of the Commission’s work included the development of an operational definition of racism: “RACISM: Assaults on the human spirit in the form of actions, biases, prejudices, and an ideology of superiority based on race that persistently cause moral suffering and physical harm of individuals and perpetuate systemic injustices and inequities.” (National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing, November 2021).

The Commission also developed a vision and mission statements:

Vision Statement: The nursing profession exemplifies inclusivity, diversity, and equity creating an antiracist praxis and environments.

Mission Statement: Set as the scope and standard of practice that nurses confront and mitigate systemic racism within the nursing profession and address the impact that racism has on nurses and nursing.

The work of the Commission to Address Racism in Nursing continues. During this time ANA reflected on their past behaviors and attitudes toward nurses of color. At the June 11, 2022 ANA Membership Assembly, ANA brought forward a Racial Reckoning Statement for members to adopt.

This statement was adopted by unanimous consent with the motion made by WNA member, Barbara Nichols, ANA Past-President, who prior to her motion delivered a fervent and enduring message on the importance of apology and forgiveness.

The motion below was accepted by unanimous consent and called for the following actions:

“That ANA will

- Continue to serve as a partner in and support the National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing as it strives to create antiracist practices and environments.
- Advocate for and follow established guidance on the reporting of race and ethnicity in professional journals and publications.
- Advocate for appropriate representation and inclusion in textbooks and other educational material.
- Actively engage in a program of diversity, equity and inclusion within the association.
- Provide transparency into the race and ethnic makeup of the ANA Board of Directors, leadership and staff.
- Deliberately work to build diversity within ANA’s volunteer and governance structure.”
([Download PDF version](#) June 11, 2022)

The following quote summarizes the ongoing journey for ANA:

“As nurses we need to unlearn much of what we thought we knew about racism — and get comfortable being uncomfortable about our profession and our own way of being — need to see nursing through a new lens and be open to what we might see versus stating that racism does not exist.”

— Anonymous Quote

National Commission to Address Racism in Nursing, 2021

On January 20, 2023, members and guests attended WNA’s Membership Assembly Dialogue Forum to listen, learn, discuss, and develop recommendations related to the national imperatives to address racism in nursing.

The following recommendations were approved at the 2023 WNA Annual Meeting That WNA,

- 1. Acknowledge that racism in nursing exists.**
- 2. Infuse in all WNA strategies and actions that demonstrate the dismantling of racism in nursing.**
- 3. Collaborate with Wisconsin’s Nursing Associations that represent nurses of color to create an advocacy group to support nurses of color in the political, educational and practice environment.**