



## A Rhetorical Response to the Editorial a Bleak Future Awaits Nurses in Traditional Employment Worldwide

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**Abstract:** The nursing profession is facing a plethora of challenges, including low pay, long hours, heavy workloads, staffing shortages, and violence in the workplace. These challenges lead to burnout, decreased patient satisfaction, and even patient harm. In response to A Bleak Future Awaits Nurses in Traditional Employment Worldwide: Insights on Practice and Career Alternatives, this analysis discusses the implications of these challenges for the future of nursing. The author argues that the future of nursing requires reform, nursing unions need to be strengthened, staffing shortages must be addressed, and violence against nurses needs to be prevented.

The impact of the American Medical Association's opposition to expanding the scope of practice for Advance Practice Registered Nurses is explored, and it argues that this opposition harms patients and undermines the autonomy of Advance Practice Registered Nurses. The article concludes by calling for action to address the nursing profession's challenges. The future of nursing depends on the ability of nurses to advocate for themselves and their patients.

**Keywords:** APRN, Burnout nursing, Global nursing issues, Staffing shortages, Workplace

### Background and Context

I am a nurse plagued by burnout due to overwhelming demands and staffing shortages. This writing is in response to McDonald's editorial A Bleak Future Awaits Nurses in Traditional Employment Worldwide: Insights on Practice and Career Alternatives.<sup>1</sup> I agree with McDonald's analysis and the bleak view the article portrays regarding the future of nursing. Nursing challenges of low pay, long hours, and heavy workloads are accurately identified. Increasingly common staffing shortages exacerbate these challenges. Staffing shortages have a significant impact on our

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healthcare system. Staffing issues are the blight of our healthcare industry.

### Burnout

Aside from the risk to patient safety, poor staffing negatively impacts nursing recruitment, retention, moral, mental, and physical well-being.

Patients are more likely to experience delays in care, increased risk to patient safety, medication errors, and even sentinel events.<sup>2</sup> Healthcare systems have become less efficient and ineffective; unfortunately, these shortages are now the status quo, and nurses have begrudgingly accepted the unfortunate and dismal changes in nursing care. Nurses are essential to providing care in areas where healthcare resources are often limited. Burnout and staffing shortages are common to select industrialized or developing countries. Nurse burnout and staffing shortages are the pandemic nurses around the globe are combating. We are not indefatigable. Burnout and staffing shortages make providing adequate care to communities and populations challenging. The dearth of preventive care promotes diseases and illness in communities.

### **Where is our support?**

Nursing unions in the United States have been criticized for failing to advocate for nurses adequately. Nursing unions have relatively low membership rates, which limits their power to negotiate on behalf of nurses. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 12.1% of nurses were union members in 2021.<sup>3</sup> Nursing unions are a relatively small and dispersed workforce. This predicament makes it difficult for unions to win concessions from employers. Nursing unions in the United States have relatively weaker bargaining power than other unions. Nurses are often employed in non-union workplaces and are less well-organized than other unions.

Political factors often constrain nursing unions in the United States. For example, some states have laws that make it difficult for unions to organize nurses.<sup>4</sup> Many nurses are politically apathetic, which makes it difficult for unions to mobilize them to support their efforts. Nursing unions often face opposition from management, who may try to prevent nurses from joining unions or who may retaliate against nurses who are active in unions. As a result of

these factors, nursing unions have needed more success in advocating for nurses on issues such as wages, benefits, working conditions, and patient safety. However, some nursing unions have been more successful in advocating for nurses. The National Nurses United (NNU) has successfully won higher wages and better working conditions for its members.<sup>5</sup> The NNU has also actively advocated for patient safety and reforms to the healthcare system.<sup>5</sup>

### **Let's Change Things**

Nursing unions can improve their effectiveness in advocating for nurses. Promoting membership; Nursing unions must increase their membership to gain more bargaining power. This can be done by educating nurses about the benefits of union membership and making it easier for nurses to join unions. Nursing unions must find ways to strengthen their bargaining power, such as by coordinating their bargaining efforts with different employers or working with other unions. Nursing unions need to mobilize nurses to support their efforts by encouraging them to vote in union elections and participate in protests and other actions. Nursing unions in the United States are sometimes divided along professional lines. For example, there are separate unions for registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nurse practitioners.<sup>6</sup> How can we expect strength in numbers when nurses, as a group, divide and separate themselves? This can make it difficult for unions to present a united front on behalf of nurses. As a result of these factors, nursing unions in the United States have been unable to achieve some of their key goals, such as improving wages and benefits for nurses, reducing nurse staffing ratios, and protecting nurses from workplace violence. Nursing unions must work with management to solve problems affecting nurses, such as staffing shortages and unsafe working conditions. By taking these steps, nursing unions can become more effective in advocating for nurses and improving the quality of care for patients.

Overall, nursing unions in the United States have had a mixed record of success in advocating for nurses. Some unions have achieved significant victories, but others have failed.<sup>5</sup> The future of nursing unions in the United States will depend on several factors, including the ability to increase membership rates, strengthen bargaining power, and overcome political constraints.

### **Violence in Healthcare**

Nurses are facing an increased risk of violence in the workplace. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare workers are more likely to be victims of workplace violence than workers in any other occupation. In 2020, over 20,000 workplace violence incidents were reported in healthcare settings, and nearly half involved nurses.<sup>7</sup> Factors that have contributed to the increased risk of violence against nurses include increased stress and frustration among patients and their families.<sup>8</sup> Patients and their families are often stressed and frustrated in the hospital. This can lead to them taking their anger out on nurses, often seen as the scapegoats for the situation. Nurses are often overworked and stressed when not enough nurses provide care. This can make them more likely to become victims of violence.

The lack of support for nurses who are victims of violence is a major problem. Many assaulted nurses do not report the incident because they fear retaliation from their employer or do not believe anything will be done. This lack of support can lead to nurses feeling isolated and traumatized. Many states do not have laws prohibiting violence against healthcare professionals.<sup>9</sup>

### **Improve Safety**

The lack of support for nurses who are victims of violence is a serious problem. However, several things can be done to address this problem. By creating a safety culture for nurses, changing laws, and educating the public, we can help protect and ensure they receive

the support they need. This means providing training on how to prevent violence, having clear policies in place for reporting and investigating incidents, and providing support to nurses who are victims of violence. Laws need to be changed to make it easier for nurses to report violence and to hold perpetrators accountable. The public needs to be educated about the issue of violence against nurses. Many people do not realize that nurses are at risk of violence, and this lack of awareness can make it difficult to address the problem.

### **Are They Better?**

The American Medical Association's (AMA) proposal to give state medical boards oversight over Advance Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) is a serious threat to the practice of APRNs.<sup>10</sup> It would create unnecessary duplication of regulatory oversight, limit patient access to care, and undermine the autonomy of APRNs. The AMA should withdraw its support for this proposal and allow APRNs to practice to the full extent of their licenses. The AMA has long been a vocal opponent of expanding the scope of practice for APRNs. In recent years, the AMA has also begun to support efforts to give state medical boards oversight over APRNs.<sup>10</sup> There are some negative implications to this proposal. First, it would create unnecessary duplication of regulatory oversight. State boards of nursing already regulate APRNs, and there is no evidence that they need additional oversight from state medical boards.

Secondly, it would create a barrier to APRNs practicing to the full extent of their licenses. State medical boards are often dominated by physicians, who may need more support to grant APRNs full practice authority. This could limit the ability of APRNs to provide care to patients, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Thirdly, it could lead to decreased patient access to care. If APRNs are required to have physician oversight, it could make it more difficult for them to obtain hospital privileges and practice

in certain settings. This could limit the availability of APRN-provided care, particularly in areas with physician shortages. Finally, it could undermine the autonomy of APRNs. APRNs are highly trained and skilled professionals and should be able to practice independently without physician oversight. Requiring APRNs to have physician oversight would send the message that APRNs need to be more capable of practicing independently, which could erode public confidence in APRNs.

### **A Call to Action**

McDonald argues that these challenges are leading to a decline in the number of nurses entering the profession and that this is likely to harm patients' quality of care.<sup>1</sup> The article concludes by calling for action to address the challenges facing nurses. I agree that action is needed, and some things can be done to improve the situation. These include increasing pay for nurses, reducing their workload, and addressing the root causes of staffing shortages. In addition to the challenges mentioned in the article, I would also like to add that staffing shortages can lead to moral distress for nurses. Moral distress occurs when nurses cannot provide the care they believe is best for their patients.<sup>11</sup> This can be a challenging experience for nurses, and it can lead to feelings of guilt, anxiety, and depression. I am concerned about the future of nursing, but I am hopeful that we can take action to address the challenges we face. By working together, we can ensure that nurses have the resources to provide high-quality care to patients worldwide. The future of nursing is facing some challenges. Raising awareness of nurses' challenges in the United States and worldwide is important. We must ensure that nurses have the support they need to provide high-quality care to patients. It is important to know the potential solutions to these challenges. We must address the root causes of staffing shortages to create a more sustainable healthcare system. For example, some initiatives are underway

to address the increasing workload, such as developing new models of care that can help reduce the number of nurses needed to provide care. The implications for nursing practice addressing the above topics of AMA, unions, shortages, and violence are complex and far-reaching.

### **Unions**

Unions have a long history of advocating for rights and improving safety. They have successfully negotiated higher wages, better benefits, and safer working conditions for their members. In recent years, nursing unions have opposed the AMA's opposition to the expanded scope of practice.<sup>12</sup>

### **Shortages**

The nursing shortage is a major problem that significantly impacts patients' quality of care.<sup>13</sup> Nurses are often overworked and understaffed, leading to errors, decreased patient satisfaction, and burnout.<sup>14</sup> The nursing shortage also makes it difficult for hospitals and other healthcare facilities to recruit and retain nurses.

### **Violence**

Workplace violence is a serious problem that affects nurses disproportionately. Nurses are more likely to be victims of workplace violence than workers in any other industry.<sup>8</sup> This is partly because nurses often work close to patients experiencing pain, frustration, or other emotions that could lead to violence. The coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated this problem, as nurses have been subjected to increased stress levels and violence.

### **Implications for Practice**

The implications of these issues for nursing practice are significant. Nurses need to be aware of the risks associated with these issues and take steps to

protect themselves. They also need to be active advocates for their rights and the rights of their patients. Nurses can play a key role in addressing these issues by educating themselves about them and the associated risks. We can change our space by advocating for our rights and the rights of their patients, by joining or supporting nursing unions, and by raising awareness of these issues among the public and policymakers. By taking these steps, we can help to create a safer and more supportive environment for themselves and their patients. The article provides an important warning about the future of nursing.<sup>1</sup> If we do not address the challenges nurses face, the quality of care will continue to decline. Thus global health will continue to decline. I urge healthcare leaders to take action to address the challenges that nurses face. This includes providing more support for nurses, reducing workloads, and increasing the number of nurses in the workforce. I also urge nurses to speak out about the challenges that they are facing. We need to make sure that our voices are heard. Together, we can create a better future for nursing and global health.

### There is a Plan

The article “Global Mentoring: Nurses Without Borders” suggests that there are still some hopeful prospects for the future of nursing.<sup>15</sup> The article discusses the importance of mentoring in the nursing profession, particularly in global health. The author argues that mentoring can help bridge cultural and professional divides and provide nurses with the knowledge and skills they need to work effectively in international settings.

The Global Mentoring Program of Nurses Without Borders (NWB) is just one example of how nurses can work together to address the nursing profession’s challenges. By mentoring each other, nurses can share their knowledge and skills and help each other grow and develop. This can ensure that the nursing profession remains strong and that nurses can continue providing high-quality patient care.

### Conclusion

Nurses play a vital role in the healthcare system, and they face several challenges, including the AMA’s opposition to the expanded scope of practice for APRNs, nursing shortages, workplace violence, and others. These challenges can significantly impact the quality of care that patients receive. Nurses need to be aware of the risks associated with these issues and take steps to protect themselves. They also need to be active advocates for their rights and the rights of their patients. Nurses can play a key role in addressing these issues by educating themselves, advocating for their rights, joining or supporting nursing unions, and raising awareness among the public and policymakers.

By taking these steps, nurses can help to create a safer and more supportive environment for themselves and their patients. The nursing profession faces many challenges, but nurses are also a strong and resilient group. They have a long history of advocating for their rights and the rights of their patients, and they will continue to do so in the face of these challenges. The future of nursing is uncertain, but nurses will continue to play a vital role in the healthcare system. Nurses are essential to providing high-quality patient care and will continue to be at the forefront of advancing healthcare. This article has helped raise awareness of the challenges facing the nursing profession. I also hope that it has inspired nurses to continue to advocate for their rights and the rights of their patients.

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## ข้อคิดเชิงวิพากษ์ต่อบทบรรณาธิการ “อนาคตที่มีดমনของพยาบาลในระบบการจ้างงานแบบดั้งเดิมที่แพร่หลายทั่วโลก”

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**บทคัดย่อ:** วิชาชีพการพยาบาลกำลังเผชิญกับความท้าทายอย่างมากซึ่งรวมถึง ค่าจ้างต่ำ ชั่วโมงการทำงานที่ยาวนาน ภาระงานหนัก การขาดแคลนบุคลากร และความรุนแรงในที่ทำงาน ความท้าทายเหล่านี้นำไปสู่ความเหนื่อยล้าในการทำงาน ความพึงพอใจของผู้ป่วยต่อการบริการลดลง และอาจเกิดอันตรายต่อผู้ป่วย ในการวิพากษ์บทบรรณาธิการ “อนาคตที่มีดมนของพยาบาลในระบบการจ้างงานแบบดั้งเดิมที่แพร่หลายทั่วโลก: ความเข้าใจเชิงลึกเกี่ยวกับการปฏิบัติและทางเลือกในอาชีพ” การวิเคราะห์ของบทบรรณาธิการนี้อภิปรายถึงความหมายโดยนัยของความท้าทายต่างๆ เพื่อนำไปใช้สำหรับอนาคตของการพยาบาล โดยผู้เขียนให้เหตุผลว่าอนาคตของการพยาบาลต้องมีการปฏิรูป สหภาพพยาบาลต้องเข้มแข็ง ต้องแก้ไขปัญหาการขาดแคลนบุคลากร และจำเป็นต้องป้องกันความรุนแรงต่อพยาบาล ผลกระทบของการคัดค้านของสมาคมการแพทยอเมริกันต่อการขยายขอบเขตการทำงานของผู้ปฏิบัติการพยาบาลขั้นสูงนั้น ได้รับการสำรวจและให้เหตุผลว่าการคัดค้านนี้เป็นอันตรายต่อผู้ป่วยและบั่นทอนความเป็นอิสระในการทำงานของผู้ปฏิบัติการพยาบาลขั้นสูง บทความนี้จึงสรุปโดยเรียกร้องให้มีการดำเนินการจัดการกับความท้าทายเหล่านี้ของวิชาชีพการพยาบาล อนาคตของการพยาบาลขึ้นอยู่กับความสามารถของพยาบาลในการพิทักษ์สิทธิของตนเองและผู้ป่วย

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