

**37<sup>th</sup> National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill**  
**Reimagining Health Equity: Addressing Ongoing Threats to America's Well-being**

**Supporting Diversity in the Nursing Workforce**

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) serves as a national nursing body to influence legislation and policies that support comprehensive efforts to mitigate the effects of health inequities for all Americans through changes that will racially and ethnically diversify the nursing workforce. The nursing profession has long been underrepresented by racial and ethnic minorities and men, which negatively impacts health outcomes. The National Center for Health Statistics highlights that a lack of diversity in healthcare correlates with poorer health and higher mortality rates. **Data show that diverse healthcare teams provide better care and improve financial performance.**<sup>1</sup> **NBNA calls on the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress to support** a nursing workforce that mirrors the U.S. population across various healthcare organizations.

**Background**

- Data reveal that diverse healthcare teams result in improved patient outcomes.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly **81%** of RNs working in the U.S. identify as *White*, which is an over representation compared to the general population. Asian RNs comprise the largest minority workforce (**7%**).<sup>2</sup>
- The representation of Black American RNs has shown a positive trend, increasing from **6%** in 2013 to **7%** in 2020.<sup>2</sup> However, the number of Black RNs is still lower than their **13%** representation in the overall U.S population.
- Hispanic or Latino/a RNs are only **6%** of the workforce, even though they are the fastest growing segment of the population at **18%**.<sup>2</sup>
- American Indian and Alaskan Native populations represent only **0.5%** of the nursing workforce and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders represent **0.4%**.<sup>2</sup>
- The nursing workforce also lacks gender diversity, with an underrepresentation of men at only **12%**.<sup>2</sup>

**Recommendations to Legislators**

**NBNA calls upon the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress to support legislation such as:**

- **H.R. 2411/S.1150 National Nursing Workforce Center Act of 2023** to expand state-based nursing workforce centers that carry out research, planning, and programs to address nursing shortages and nursing education
- Increase the number and diversity of nurses, particularly those skilled in health equity, population health, and social determinants of health in leadership roles and boards
- **H.R. 4328 National Nursing Shortage Task Force Act of 2023** recommends policies for addressing nursing shortage in the U.S. Increase diversity of the nursing workforce to advance health equity.
- **H.R. 3263 Support Faculty and Expand Access to Nursing School Act of 2023** recommends that DOH and Human Services award grants to nursing schools with nursing faculty shortages or clinical preceptors. Support research, planning, and programs to address nursing shortages, education, and other matters affecting the nursing workforce.

## References

<sup>1</sup>National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity. The National Academies Press. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/25982/the-future-of-nursing-2020-2030-charting-a-path-to>

<sup>2</sup>Smiley, R. A., Allegeyer, R. L., Shobo, Y., Lyons, K. C. Letourneau, R., Zhong, E., Kaminiski, Ozturk, N., & Alexander, M. (2022). The 2022 national workforce survey. Journal of Nursing Regulation, 14(1), S1-S90. [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(23\)00047-9/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(23)00047-9/fulltext)