



EDDIE BERNICE
JOHNSON
HEALTH EQUITY
POLICY SCHOLARS INSTITUTE
NATIONAL BLACK NURSES ASSOCIATION, INC.

National Black Nurses Association, Inc. | nbna.org | Silver Spring, MD

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National Black Nurses Association Launches the Eddie Bernice Johnson Health Equity Policy Scholars Institute with \$250,000 Pfizer Community Forward Health Equity Grant

First-of-its-kind national policy leadership program equips Black nurses to move from bedside to boardroom, carrying communities' voices into the rooms where healthcare policy is made

SILVER SPRING, MD

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) is proud to announce the official launch of the Eddie Bernice Johnson Health Equity Policy Scholars Institute, a transformative, year-long health equity and policy leadership program made possible by a \$250,000 Pfizer Community Forward Health Equity Grant. The Institute represents NBNA's most ambitious investment in the policy leadership development of Black nurses since its founding in 1971.

The educational and action-oriented program is named in honor of Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, the first nurse elected to the United States Congress. Originally conceptualized as the Health Policy Advocacy and Justice Institute by Dr. Vivienne Pierce McDaniel, Chair of NBNA's Health Policy Committee, the institute was later renamed following a leadership discussion in which NBNA Co-Chair Dr. Celia McIntosh emphasized the importance of honoring Congresswoman Johnson as a component of the education. Dr. Pierce McDaniel and NBNA President Dr. Sheldon D. Fields made the decision to name the institute in recognition of Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson's extraordinary legacy as both a nurse and a national legislator.

"The Eddie Bernice Johnson Health Equity Policy Scholars Institute represents a bold investment in the leadership power of Black nurses. Through immersive policy education, mentorship, and community partnership, we are equipping nurses to move beyond the bedside and into the rooms where decisions are made, ensuring equity is not an aspiration, but an actionable policy priority."

— Vivienne Pierce McDaniel, DNP, MSN, RN, FADLN, FNAP, Chair, NBNA Health Policy Committee and Program Director, Eddie Bernice Johnson Health Equity Scholars Institute

THE INSTITUTE: A NATIONAL PATHWAY FROM BEDSIDE TO POLICY

The Eddie Bernice Johnson Health Equity Policy Scholars Institute operationalizes a structured, year-long leadership pathway through a blended learning model that combines online modules, live virtual sessions, community policy labs, mentorship, and legislative shadowing experiences. The program will train two cohorts of 15 nurses each over the two-year grant period.

The curriculum is built on eight Nursing Professional Development (NPD) modules designed to move nurses across the full spectrum of policy engagement:

- **Module 1:** Foundations of Health Justice and Policy in Nursing
- **Module 2:** Foundations of Health Advocacy in Nursing
- **Module 3:** Foundations of Health Policy History in North America
- **Module 4:** Legislative and Policy-Making Processes & Key Actors
- **Module 5:** Social Determinants of Health: Bridging Practice and Policy
- **Module 6:** Nursing Leadership in Health Policy & Achieving Health Equity
- **Module 7:** Ethical & Legal Considerations for Minority Nurses in Policy Engagement
- **Module 8:** Historical and Emerging Roles for Nurses in Shaping Policy

Participants complete policy products including policy briefs, model legislative language, and community testimony, all co-designed with the communities they serve. Scholars are supported by mentors, policy coaches, and a national network of nurse leaders committed to equity-centered systems change.

WHO THE INSTITUTE SERVES

The Institute is open to members of the National Black Nurses Association for nurses, and student nurses enrolled in baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral programs who are committed to advancing health equity through policy leadership. This includes Registered Nurses, APRNs, Nurse Managers, Nurse Educators, and nurses working in community health, DEI, quality improvement, and advocacy roles. Target audience also includes Licensed Practical Nurses and Vocational Nurses (LPNs/LVNs) engaged in policy-relevant community and clinical settings, recognizing that nurses at every level bring essential perspectives to policy work.

“This Pfizer Community Forward Health Equity Grant affirms what we have always known, Black nurses are essential architects of equitable health systems. By honoring Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson’s legacy, we are preparing a new generation of nurse leaders to influence legislation, advance justice, and drive systemic change in partnership with the communities we serve.”

— **Sheldon D. Fields, PhD, RN, CRNP, FNP-BC, AACRN, FAANP, FNAP, FADLN, President, National Black Nurses Association**

WHY THIS INITIATIVE MATTERS NOW

The Institute is a direct response to the current political and public health environment, in which decisions about healthcare access, coverage, and quality disproportionately impact historically marginalized and underserved communities. Black nurses are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between frontline clinical experience and policy decision-making, and this program gives them the tools, networks, and platforms to do so effectively.

“As the first Black nurse elected to Congress, she didn’t just break barriers; she expanded what was possible. She showed that nurses belong not only at the bedside, but at decision making tables where laws are written and systems are shaped.”

— **Lauren White, MD, Niece of Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson**

The initiative builds on NBNA’s Health Policy Institute during the Annual NBNA Institute and Conference and its long-standing National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill tradition which has sent Black nurses directly to Congressional offices for more than three decades. The Eddie Bernice Johnson Health Equity Policy Scholars Institute deepens that legacy by creating a structured, year-long pathway to sustained policy leadership.

The Pfizer Community Forward Health Equity Grant underscores the critical role nurses play in shaping equitable health systems and recognizes NBNA’s longstanding commitment to policy leadership, community partnership, and social justice. The grant proposal was written by Dr. Vivienne Pierce McDaniel, Program Director; Dr. Deborah Stamps, Program Consultant; and NBNA President, Dr. Sheldon D. Fields.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL BLACK NURSES ASSOCIATION, INC.

Founded in 1971, the National Black Nurses Association represents more than 308,000 Black nurses across the United States. NBNA is dedicated to providing quality health care services to vulnerable populations, increasing the number of Black nurses in the workforce, and influencing health policy to eliminate health disparities. Through advocacy, professional development, research, and community engagement, NBNA continues to amplify the voice and impact of Black nurses nationwide.

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