The American Academy of Nursing (Academy’s) vision is healthy lives for all people. As outlined in the organization’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) Statement, the Academy intentionally works to dismantle structural and institutional racism to promote social justice. To actualize our vision and EDI statement, the Academy’s mission is to improve health and achieve health equity by impacting policy through nursing leadership, innovation, and science. The Academy strives to achieve its mission and vision through four primary goals: influence policy that achieves health equity, promotes wellness, eliminates racism, and improves health care delivery; integrate nursing science into health, wellness, and social justice decisions; disseminate nurse-driven innovation to reduce inequities and improve health; and position nurse leaders to advance local and global change.

In conjunction with the organization’s 23 Expert Panels, comprised of Academy Fellows in practice, research, policy, and academia, the 2023–2024 policy priorities to achieve health equity further the Academy's longstanding commitment to addressing the underlying factors that impact the ability to achieve healthy lives. Each of the Academy’s priorities is synergistic and supports policies that eliminate health inequities and disparities—striving to promote patient-centered as well as culturally safe and supportive care.

2023-2024 Policy Priorities to Achieve Health Equity

Increase Accessibility to All Forms of Health Care

Promote High-Impact Advances in Practice, Innovation, and Science

Build Capacity to Support Nurses and Other Providers

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Increase Accessibility to All Forms of Health Care

The Academy believes that to truly improve the health of all individuals, policies must advance evidenced-based approaches aimed at eliminating racism and improving equity to close gaps in health care access and health outcomes. This is particularly vital as health disparities disproportionately impact racial and ethnic communities, people with disabilities, migrant populations, LGBTQ+ individuals, children, older adults, those living in rural communities, indigenous communities, and individuals experiencing persistent poverty or inequality.

The Academy also remains committed to preventing and reducing violence, protecting our communities from climate change and environmental toxins, and improving access to mental health care. To that end, the Academy will continue to champion policies that rebuild the nation's public health infrastructure to better prepare for national emergencies and natural disasters, as well as preventing injuries and responding to infectious diseases. Moreover, the Academy will continue to safeguard the wellness and safety of every individual, in any location, during all health stages, including individuals seeking safe sexual and reproductive care as well as those who seek gender-affirming care.

Promote High-Impact Advances in Practice, Innovation, and Science

The Academy supports policies that adopt modernizations in technologies, treatments, and models of care that are sustainable and effective over time. Innovation in the health care industry, as well as emerging practices, must be tested and advanced for heightened impact and outcomes. This also requires necessary investments in research and scientific careers.

We must also better understand the needs and social risks of the individuals and communities we care for as well as how their needs evolve. Positive health outcomes, quality of care, as well as patient safety, are tied to language access, health literacy, and the provision of patient-centered as well as culturally safe and supportive care. Standardized and improved data collection and analysis, including data on the social determinants of health, will be paramount.

Build Capacity to Support Nurses and Other Providers

We must ensure that all individuals in the communities we serve have equitable access to health care. Specifically, the Academy supports policy solutions that build capacity in the health care system including advancements in telehealth, payment reform, full practice authority, and making permanent the other innovative and successful solutions temporarily implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We must also build the capacity of the health care system to ensure that patients can receive and their clinicians can provide optimal care. Nurses and other health care providers ensure high-quality care, yet they continue to experience emotional, ethical, moral, and physical distress. It is well known that patient health is linked to the health and well-being of their clinicians.

Policies must be in place to address the well-being of nurses and other health care providers while ending violence and trauma to ensure safe work environments. Additionally, efforts must be taken to reduce regulatory burden as well as promote innovative solutions to support workforce readiness and retention.