



Position Statement: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

This statement is made in partnership with and under the guidance of leaders of The New England Regional Black Nurses Association (NERBNA).

The first principle of **The Code of Ethics for Nurses** professes that, “the nurse, in all professional relationships, practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual unrestricted by consideration of social or economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems.” Nurses are called upon to renew this individual and professional oath, as it is essential to the profession’s ethical and moral commitment, and it must be acted upon at the institutional, local, and community levels. Further, **The Code of Ethics for Nurses** obligates nurses to condemn racist and violent behavior as well as policies that allow institutional and systemic racism to occur. As a profession, nurses reduce suffering and promote healing through compassion, caring, empathy, evidence-based practice, and science; **Our patients, colleagues, and community need us now more than ever.**

Racism, discrimination, and violence have a direct and negative impact on health and well-being. The color of a person’s skin, a person’s ethnicity, as well as where they live, work, and worship, are social determinants of health that can exacerbate health challenges, and ultimately keep a population at substantial risk resulting in chronic diseases and premature death. The challenges inherent in achieving equitable care and reducing health disparities demands the involvement of all disciplines providing healthcare. Nursing, as the largest segment of the healthcare workforce, is well positioned to transform the healthcare system and advance health equity. Nurses can, and should, lead efforts to reduce health disparities and advance health for all.

Our healthcare workplaces are not exempt from racism, discrimination, and violence that lead to systemic racism and disproportionate professional opportunities. While we work toward the eradication of systemic and institutional racism, personal racism, and unconscious bias, nurse leaders must increase the diversity within nursing leadership and the nursing workforce. We cannot remain silent or succumb to the institutional structures and processes that can block openness and prevent change.

The Organization of Nurse Leaders (ONL) Believes:

As nurses, **WE** are called to action to find ways to break down the long-standing barriers that have allowed biases to take hold and prevent meaningful and sustained change. **WE** have an obligation to use our trust and influence to stop institutional cultures, behaviors, or anything that negatively impacts the health and well-being of our patients. Racism is a human rights issue, and is a crisis in healthcare and in society at large, and it is time for all nurses to rise, unite, initiate, and implement action to eliminate conscious and unconscious bias as well as systemic and institutional racism.

It is ONL's position that continued acts of prejudice, oppression, and violence against black, brown, and other diverse communities simply cannot be tolerated. ONL believes it is time for all nurses to commit to becoming active and purposeful change agents. **Let's RISE in UNITY** and take this pledge:

The Nurse's Pledge to Champion Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

As a nurse, I pledge to:

- Actively listen to learn
- Champion strategies that advance equity
- See, hear, and accept people from every race and culture
- Promote the practice of self-assessment for unconscious biases
- Examine my practice and consider methods I can employ to stop contributing to systemic racism
- Be anti-racist, and stand with and stand up for, those with racially and culturally diverse backgrounds
- Foster a culture of diversity, equity and inclusivity
- Increase diversity within my sphere of influence
- Advocate for anti-racist training in formal education
- Hold myself and others accountable to committing to reforms and action
- Pursue social justice by listening and engaging in dialogue with others, even when it is uncomfortable
- Support legislative efforts aimed at eliminating racism and discrimination, and supporting basic human rights
- Educate myself about systemic injustice, and then use my trusted voice to influence and educate others



Sasha DuBois MSN, RN
President
New England Regional Black Nurses Association, Inc.



Patricia Samra MS, RN
President
Organization of Nurse Leaders, Inc.

The Organization of Nurse Leaders, in collaboration with The New England Regional Black Nurses Association will keep this pledge alive through educational offerings and support for legislative efforts to eliminate systemic and institutional racism, remove injustices in access to healthcare and address the social determinants of health within diverse communities. ***Please join us and do your part.***

References and Resources

- Allard, B. L. (2020). *Inspired Healthcare: A Value-Based Care Coordination Model*. Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International.
- American Academy of Nursing. (2020, June 1). Racism Affects Health and Wellbeing and it Must be Addressed. <https://www.aannet.org/news/press-releases/position-statement-on-racism>
- American Nurses Association (2020). Ethics and Human Rights. Code of Ethics for Nurses. <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/>
- Blas, E., & Kurup, A. S. (Eds.). (2010). *Equity, social determinants and public health programmes*. The World Health Organization.
- Braveman, P. (2014). What are health disparities and health equity? We need to be clear. *Public Health Reports*, 129(1_suppl2), 5-8. doi: 10.1177/003335491412915203
- Ford, S. (2019). Exclusive: High Level of Racial Discrimination Faced by Nurses Revealed. *Nursing Times*. <https://www.nursingtimes.net/news/workforce/exclusive-high-level-of-racial-discrimination-faced-by-nurses-revealed-02-10-2019/>
- Grant, E. J. (2020, June 1). ANA President Condemns Racism, Brutality and Senseless Violence Against Black Communities. <https://www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2020/ana-president-condemns-racism-brutality-and-senseless-violence-against-black-communities/>
- Tufts Medical Center OB/GYN Residency. (2020, June 3). Pledge of Commitment to Anti-Racist Efforts. <https://medium.com/@ctrammel/pledge-of-commitment-to-anti-racism-efforts-d0cecd6c5e>
- World Health Organization (2020). Year of the Nurse and Midwife. <https://www.who.int/campaigns/year-of-the-nurse-and-the-midwife-2020>