

# AMERICAN NURSES FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS

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# Coronavirus Response Fund: Helping Nurses

Since the Fund was established in April 2020, generous donations from individuals, corporations and foundations helped launch many initiatives including:



## Mental Well-Being

To date, over 25,300 nurses have participated in the [Well-Being Initiative](#) program offerings, this includes:

- **Moodfit** 6,000 active users on this app that supports nurses' overall mental wellness.
- **Happy App** Over 1,000 nurses used this free, 24/7 support line for one-on-one conversations.
- **Narrative Expressive Writing Program** Nearly 800 nurses participated in the program's first phase.
- **Stress Self-Assessment Tool** Over 3,300 nurses used this 10-question scale to evaluate their stress levels and get recommendations for resources.
- **"A Nursing State of Mind"** Podcast series was downloaded by over 11,500 nurses.



## Financial Assistance

- **Distributed in partnership with Nurses House, financial aid grants** totaling \$2.35 million to over 2,000 nurses across 45 states.
- **Granted an additional \$250,000 to Nurses House** at the end of 2020, with specific directives to allocate:
  - \$100,000 specifically for nurses of color
  - \$75,000 for nurses working in long-term care, hospice, and home care
  - The remaining \$75,000 is for RNs with no restriction



## Advocacy

- **Launched the [Pulse on the Nation's Nurses Survey Series](#)** focused on core issues of mental health, financial impact, PPE, innovation, and vaccine development. Results generated interest from the media, Capitol Hill, the CDC, the FDA, and FEMA.
- **Funded a major grant to the TriCouncil for Nursing** - American Nurses Association, American Organization of Nurse Leaders, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, National League for Nursing and American Association of Colleges of Nurses - to generate an advocacy blueprint for post-COVID nursing issues.
- **Provided two grants to Planetree International** to convene a coalition of nursing leaders, patient/family and elder advocates for the creation of a prototype of the Family Presence Policy Decision-Making Toolkit. This resource is for nursing executives to use when supporting safe family presence in healthcare settings during major health crises.



## Education and Evidence-Based Information

- **Supported the creation of a [COVID-19 webinar series](#)** produced by ANA. The series attracts thousands of nurses each week, with the total number of views now over 220,000. Topics include PPE, ventilators, racial disparities, and mental health.
- **Sponsored ANA's participation in a national Ad Council [vaccine education campaign](#)**, which also featured the AMA and AHA.



“ **I stay positive** at work with my patients and team by taking time to relax and reduce stress by walking along the beach every chance I get. Our team of nurses are resilient and provide outstanding care, but we can only provide great care if we take time to care for ourselves. Our mental and physical health must not be overlooked during the all-encompassing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We can only continue this pace by supporting one another and encouraging one another to take the time we desperately need to recharge. ”

**Chante' L., MSN, RN, CNOR**



## Vera Bradley: Fashionably Supporting Nurses

At the start of the pandemic, Vera Bradley, the iconic women's fashion and lifestyle brand, committed to supporting the nation's healthcare workers, especially nurses. In addition to distributing over five million medical-grade face masks to frontline workers, the company also manufactured branded, cotton face masks for the public to purchase.

"Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, we found comfort and guidance in what has always mattered most: each other," said Rob Wallstrom, Chief Executive Officer of Vera Bradley. "We are inspired every day by the nurses and first responders who have so bravely been taking care of us, and we are honored to support the American Nurses Foundation and the incredible work they're doing to help the nation's largest body of healthcare professionals."

Early last spring, Vera Bradley executives announced it would donate a percentage of sales from these cotton face masks. **From April through July 2020 this campaign raised a remarkable \$633,636 for the Foundation's Coronavirus Response Fund for Nurses. Vera Bradley was so pleased with the results - and all the Foundation accomplished with the funds - that they extended the campaign through June 2021.**

"We are incredibly grateful to Vera Bradley for their generous support, as well as their recognition and appreciation of the vital role nurses have in caring for and healing communities, especially during the pandemic," said Willie Manzano, MA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, President, American Nurses Foundation. "We have so much important work underway, and this donation is helping us make significant impact on the critical areas where nurses need immediate and ongoing support."



You can view a video of Rob Wallstrom presenting this donation to Foundation Executive Director Kate Judge [here](#).

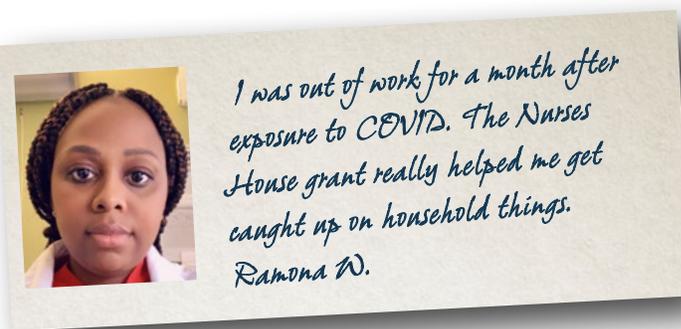
## Nurses House

In July of 2020, the Foundation's national survey of 10,000 nurses found more than half of the respondents were worse off financially than they were pre-pandemic. While many nurses faced work challenges like PPE shortages and staffing along with the mental stress of caring for COVID-19 patients, others faced furloughs, lost wages due to contracting COVID, or unpaid time off to care for a family member.

To alleviate this financial strain on nurses, the Foundation, through direct donations to the Coronavirus Response Fund for Nurses, granted \$2.6 million to [Nurses House](#). The grant provided direct financial aid to U.S. registered nurses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, Nurses House distributed \$2.35 million, which assisted over 2,000 individual nurses across 45 states. This funding amounts to nearly 90% of the total amount that Nurses House has provided to nurses over the past year.

As one nurse said in response to the financial aid, "Thank you SO much for the generous grant from the COVID-19 emergency fund. The support helped me stay afloat after being out of work with severe COVID. Thank you and the American Nurses Foundation for making this assistance possible for other nurses as well as myself."

Every day, nurses are pushing themselves to the limit so our communities and loved ones stay safe and healthy. All of us here at the American Nurses Foundation are honored we can care for nurses in return.





# Making Nurses' Voices Count

## PULSE ON THE NATION'S NURSES

### A COVID-19 Survey Series

Last year the Foundation committed to addressing the impact of COVID-19 on nurses and the nursing workforce. Recognizing action first requires deeper understanding, the Foundation launched the [Pulse on the Nation's Nurses: COVID-19 Survey Series](#). Since May 2020, the Foundation conducted eight surveys focusing on mental health, financial impact, PPE, innovation, and vaccine development.



"At the Foundation, we've been supporting and listening to our frontline caregivers since long before the pandemic. While we navigate the phases of our COVID-19 relief, recovery, and rebuilding, it's critical to recognize we also need to address the phases of nurses' personal experiences and needs," said Willie Manzano, MA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN, President, American Nurses Foundation. "These surveys give nurses a voice to share their experiences and help inform the Foundation's programmatic and grant strategies."

The results reveal the myriad of hardships nurses face beyond daily work challenges. In the most recent [Mental Health and Wellness survey](#), more than half of nurses disclosed feeling anxious and overwhelmed. One survey participant described the stark reality she and other nurses face: "All of my ICU colleagues are completely burned out. We see such a large number of COVID deaths in our unit it's very taxing to our mental health."

This concern for mental health was echoed by another nurse who said, "**As a COVID ICU nurse, I worry about my mental health. I hope there is a real focus on assisting those of us who work the frontlines. I would love to see articles to help us process all this loss, sadness, and uncertainty.**"

The latest survey, [COVID-19 One Year Impact Assessment](#), disclosed new vulnerabilities among nurses from deferred retirement investments, lost savings, and the end of student loan forbearance. For many frontline nurses, reductions in salary and additional expenses like childcare are significantly affecting their financial security.

**"After receiving a nursing grant, I am doing better financially. However, I dread when school begins because I can't afford to have my children looked after while I'm at work."**

As the needs of nurses evolve, the Foundation will continue conducting these pertinent surveys through 2022 to mobilize the voices of nurses around critical issues impacting them during this unprecedented health crisis and beyond.



**“We have been through a tough year** that taught us about ourselves as individuals, team members, and nurses. We learned a lot, notably, just how strong we are especially when we band together. There have been some very difficult days we experienced with our patients and I watched us grow from fearing the unknown at the beginning of the pandemic to now being more hopeful and knowledgeable. This experience has made me a more self-aware nurse, not just when caring for others, but also myself. I'm making sure to advocate that all staff take time for self-care. **We can't care for others if we don't care for ourselves.**”

**Lori S., MSN, RN, CNRN**

# COVID-19 One Year Impact Assessment

To mark one year since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, the Foundation released the results of its latest survey, the [COVID-19 Impact Assessment](#). Following are highlights of the results from the survey of 22,000 nurses nationwide:

## MENTAL HEALTH

The pandemic continues to take a toll on nurses' mental health, particularly those early in their career.



**NURSES 34 YEARS AND YOUNGER FEEL:**

**81% EXHAUSTED**  
**71% OVERWHELMED**  
**65% ANXIOUS**

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

Concerns about finances are still a factor.



**FAMILY FINANCES AND CONCERNS OUTSIDE WORK:**

**41% FINANCE/DEBT A TOP CONCERN**  
**19% FINANCIALLY WORSE-OFF NOW**

## STATE OF THE PROFESSION

While 85% of nurses say they don't intend to leave the profession, 40% say they are considering or plan to leave their position in the next 6 months.



**WHY ARE NURSES LEAVING THEIR POSITIONS?**

**47% WORK AFFECTING HEALTH**  
**45% INSUFFICIENT STAFFING**

## VACCINES

A majority (70%) of nurses have received the vaccines.

**BARRIERS STILL EXIST:**

**46% BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICANS NOT VACCINATED**  
**25% UNDECIDED ABOUT RECEIVING THE VACCINE**



# Writing for Resilience in Nursing's COVID-19 Era



## How to cope with the emotional toll of COVID-19 era nursing?

That question spurred the Foundation to fund a Narrative Expressive Writing program designed to help nurses develop emotional resilience.



***“Nurses have experienced a lot of fear, stress, and grief with so many patients dying. Nurses are often the ones holding the iPad up so families can say goodbye. It’s traumatic,”*** said Meredith Mealer, RN, PhD, PMHNP, Associate Professor, School of Medicine at the University of Colorado’s Anschutz Medical Campus, who has researched ways to address psychological distress among healthcare workers for 15+ years.

Streamlined for time-stressed nurses, the program features five weekly writing prompts about nurses’ pandemic experiences. Nurses send anonymous submissions to a database. They receive written responses from licensed mental health providers whose follow up questions and insights are designed to help nurses develop the research-validated coping skill of more flexible thinking about traumatic events. A second phase began in April 2021 and will serve up to 4,000 nurses.

Responsive support from mental health providers is a unique feature of the program, which applies recent research on the ability to develop resilience – the ability to see a situation from more than one viewpoint.

“We are providing nurses with supports to cultivate cognitive flexibility and reframe thinking about traumatic experiences,” said Mealer. “This is important because nurses with higher resiliency are significantly less likely to have symptoms of burnout, PTSD, depression, and anxiety.”

Writing helps the participants process traumatic or stressful experiences described by nurses like their fear of getting the coronavirus and transmitting it to loved ones, seeing both young and old die, witnessing chronic health conditions from the virus, and stress from overwhelming numbers in hospitals. ***“It’s like all I see in my head is this loop of death,”*** wrote one nurse, describing days when multiple patients coded simultaneously.

***“Many nurses are in self-preservation mode as they go to work,”*** Mealer noted. “As we emerge from the pandemic, we will continue to see nurses who were negatively impacted but just were not ready to address or process their experiences until after the pandemic was over. From my ongoing research, I know there will always be a need to build resilience and promote mental wellness in our bedside nurses.”



Mealer adds, ***“What really matters is that if you improve nurses’ resilience and wellness, they’re going to get better.”***



**“ I am fatigued** and have been stretched thin over the past year. I have seen myself and others at their best and at their worst. Still, it has been my privilege to walk alongside my patients through this pandemic. To be a steady, calm, and confident resource of reliable, evidence-based information. I am continuing to shift my focus and energy towards helping the poor and marginalized. I will be traveling to Tijuana to work with displaced and vulnerable populations in collaboration with existing healthcare organizations along the US-Mexico border. ”

**Emma C., APRN**



# Practice-Grounded Vision for Nursing’s Future

Wilhelmina (Willie) Manzano, MA, RN, NEA-BC, FAAN began leading the American Nurses Foundation board a year ago just as COVID-19 began to disrupt life and nursing practice.

“We know the pandemic has taken a toll, and the Foundation offers resources to support your mental health, well-being, and help build resilience,” says Manzano.

Manzano brings a practice-grounded clarity of vision to what’s necessary for nurses at this moment, and as the Foundation works to transform the nursing profession to meet the nation’s most urgent healthcare needs.

Manzano was recently named Chief Operating Officer for all Perioperative Services at NewYork-Presbyterian Health System Enterprise, a 10-site healthcare system, while maintaining her role as Chief Nursing Executive. She helped the organization respond to the tsunami of COVID-19 patients in her prior roles as CNE and Chief Quality Officer.

“I am so proud of how my nurse colleagues in New York and nationally answered the endless calls for assistance, innovation, teamwork, compassion, and sharing of their expertise,” says Manzano, who also serves as Assistant Dean at Columbia University School of Nursing and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

Manzano is especially interested in increasing leadership opportunities for nurses and in developing and supporting a more diverse nursing workforce. “We are committed to assuring the voices of nurses drive the organization’s priorities, programs, tools, resources, and advocacy. My hope is that COVID-19 will be a catalyst for our urgent work to reimagine nursing so we can improve access and health outcomes for all Americans. I can think of no better group to advance health equity; and I am forever grateful for all our nurses and frontline caregivers continue to do to keep all of us healthy and safe.”

## CALNOC Establishes \$2.5 Million Endowment

[The Collaborative Alliance for Nursing Outcomes](#) (CALNOC), the nation’s first database of nurse sensitive measures and a pioneer in health services research,



recently endowed a \$2.5 million gift to the Foundation for the establishment of the CALNOC Research Fund. This is the largest endowment gift in the Foundation’s history.

The newly created Fund will foster innovative research and scientific inquiry on the contributions of nursing practice in ambulatory care to patient care, safety, and quality. The Foundation, with counsel from the American

Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and the leadership of Rebecca Graystone, Vice President, Magnet and Pathway programs, will provide grants from the Fund.

This endowment is a testament to the past efforts of CALNOC researchers and nurse scientists, as well as the contributions of nurses, nursing leaders and executives who championed quality and safety measurements to improve patient care.

“This Fund ensures the legacy of CALNOC will continue and flourish through the American Nurses Foundation,” said Mary Foley, Chairperson of CALNOC. “We are grateful for the Foundation and ANCC for their support and stewardship of this endeavor.”

“*I am doing well, and I’m glad I was able to get the vaccine. At the beginning of the pandemic, I felt scared, anxious, afraid of catching the virus and giving it to my family and friends. Fast forward a year, I have more knowledge and feel less anxious about the virus. Especially as more people get the vaccine. The pandemic made me a more adaptive nurse able to work in different roles. From being a charge nurse in my unit, to cross training in the COVID ICU and floating all around the hospital. It also made me resilient and more patient.*”

**Dionne R., BSN, RN, CMSRN**



# Nurses Month Shop and Celebrate!

Over the past year, nurses have shown the world that in times of greatest need, they are at our side to provide expert care and a hand to hold. During Nurses Month this May the Foundation encourages you to join in honoring nurses for their tireless commitment.

Go [here](#) to find an array of special offers from generous supporters – plus celebratory deals exclusively for nurses. When you make a purchase, participate in an event, or join a campaign, the Foundation will receive donations from the proceeds. By taking advantage of these offers you will help the Foundation provide nurses with mental health and wellness support and continuing education, as well as drive national advocacy focused on nurses and patients.



YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE



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## The world has never needed nurses more.

### Help support the critical work we do with a tax-smart gift from your IRA.

Did you know you will owe income tax on money in your IRA? You can avoid those taxes completely if you make a gift to the Foundation from your IRA either through your estate or, if you are over age 70 ½, during your lifetime.

If you are over 70½, this contribution from your IRA can satisfy your required minimum distribution without increasing your income taxes. The Qualified Charitable Distribution is a tax-reducing and tax-free way to support the nursing profession.

You have important priorities for your family and loved ones, and we know they come first. When you are ready, we will be here to help you shape a charitable gift plan that suits your needs and allows you to keep supporting the Foundation's important work.

For more information please visit our website at [giftplanning.nursingworld.org](http://giftplanning.nursingworld.org) or call Karen Schofield-Leca at 301-628-5095.



The American Nurses Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with a vision of a healthy world through the power of nursing.

8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492

[givetonursing@ana.org](mailto:givetonursing@ana.org)

301-628-5227