



Nursing Retention & Burnout Workgroup Action Plan for FY 2026 on Priority Statewide Recommendations & Key Strategies

March 2026

The Washington Center for Nursing is a non-profit 501(c)(3). WCN supports a healthy Washington by engaging nurses' expertise, influence, and perspective and by building a diverse, highly qualified nurse workforce to meet future demands.

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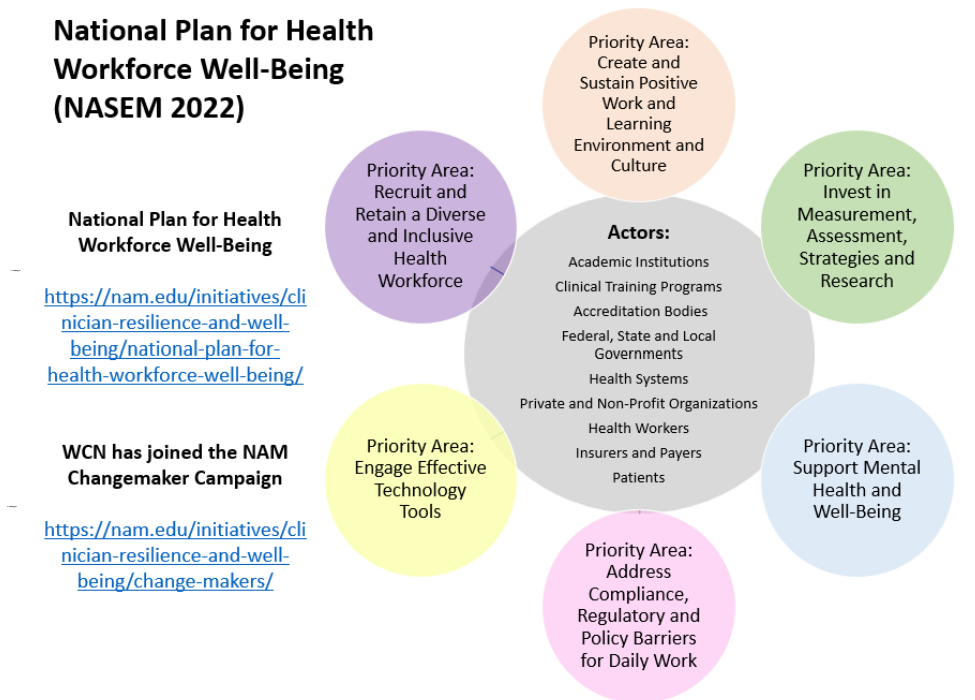
Introduction

In 2024, the Washington Center for Nursing (WCN) published *Prioritizing Nursing Well Being to Strengthen the Workforce: Washington Burnout Survey and Next Steps*ⁱ. Essential to retention of the nursing workforce, workgroups were established to identify key strategies in 2025. This report summarizes action plans and key strategies for five workgroups. Two work groups, Compliance & Regulation and Technology Utilization combined efforts to create one action plan. The Measurement & Assessment Workgroup collaborated to create evaluation approaches for the resulting four action plans.

The WCN is a member of the National Academy of Medicine Changemaker Campaignⁱⁱ. The 520 organizations to date aim to advance the National Plan Priority Areas and spark a national movement to support health workforce well-being. What it means to be a change maker is to affirm a commitment to and reflect on their organizational progress toward institutionalizing well-being as a long-term value.

Organization of Workgroups

Workgroups are organized in accordance with the National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being, established by the National Association for Science, Engineering, and Medicine in 2022.ⁱⁱⁱ The National Academy of Medicine released the National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being in October 2022 to drive collective action to strengthen health workforce well-being and restore the health of the nation.



Key Strategies Identified by Workgroups

Compliance and Regulation Workgroup Key Strategies

Group Co-Chairs:

- Alison Bradywood, DNP, MPH, RN, NEA-BC, Executive Director, Washington State Board of Nursing
- Trish Anderson, Senior Director, Safety and Quality, Washington Hospital Association

1. Time spent on documentation in hospitals is reduced through developing an infographic detailing necessary regulatory and compliance requirements to provide more time for providing patient care and nurse self-care.
2. Develop best-practices for creating nursing protocols and standing orders to encourage systems to use nurses at the top of their scope of practice. Create a clearinghouse for nursing protocols. Cross-promote WABON advisory opinions on nursing scope of practice.
3. Develop infographic detailing Joint Commission and CMS mandatory learning and trainings to help hospitals streamline modules that add to the administrative burden of health workers. Provide examples on mode of education module delivery. Alternative recommendations for patient safety, process change and compliance.
4. Standardize licensure processes to reduce barriers for foreign-educated nurses and English proficiency testing.

Technology Utilization Workgroup Key Strategies

Group Co-Chairs:

- Cyd Marckmann, DNP, ARNP, Director, APP Fellowship, Multicare Medical Academics
- Suzanne Swadener, RN, MHA, Health Workforce Senior Policy Analyst, Health Care Authority

1. Develop statewide training on guidance in the use of AI to streamline documentation burden to reduce burnout. Include training of undergraduate and graduate nursing students.
2. Explore and develop guidance for use of AI software for predictive staffing to provide greater flexibility in scheduling and to ensure adequate staffing using historical data for the greatest productivity.
3. Provide statewide nurse leadership at all levels and advocacy training to increase the voice of nurses to provide for a culture change to promote wellness, reduce burnout and increase retention.

Action Plan Summary for combined Compliance, Regulation and Technology Workgroups

- **Comments for Rule Hearing:** Rulemaking scheduled for November 14th, everyone signs onto written testimony.
- **Align Rule Making with National Initiative:** WCN publishes a story about this activity and ties rational to FON and IOM to educate the broader community of nurses including IENs by June 2026.
- **Convening:** Create proposed rule language for the November 14th hearing. Testify with stories to support the rulemaking language.
- **Analysis:** Identify organizations to learn about AI and regulations around AI use for nurses. Interview interested parties by December.
- **Edit and Dissemination:** Finalize a copy of the interviews and make a communication plan by November 30th. Coordinate with the measurement group for an evaluation phase by December 31.
- **Literature Review:** Initial review of published best practices and guidelines on AI in nursing and other professions best practices both inpatient and outpatient by November 30th. Develop a clear summary of current published literature on AI use in health professions by December 2025.

Mental Health and Well-Being Workgroup Key Strategies

Group Co-Chairs:

- Dan Ferguson, M.S., Director WA State Allied Health Center for Excellence
- John Furman- John Furman, PhD, MSN, COHN-S Independent Consultant

1. Adequate mental health services are available, easily accessible, confidential, dignified, paid for, and health workers and learners are encouraged to use them.

Possible steps:

- Examine potential sponsors or a committee for developing mental health service road map.
[Dementia Road Map](#)
[Palliative Care Rode Map](#)
- Examine potential funding for providing mental health services.
- Evaluation to track whether access to mental health resources is correlated with improved health worker well-being.

2. Stigma and barriers are reduced for health workers and learners to disclose mental health issues and utilize mental health services. Health workers and learners do not experience unnecessary punitive actions when seeking mental health services.

Possible steps:

- Convene state licensing and certification boards to accelerate appropriate changes to mental health reporting requirements, reduce stigma, and normalize the process for health workers to seek help for workplace-related stresses.
 - WABON align questions about personal health information with the Americans with Disabilities Act to inquire only about current impairments that may affect their ability to provide care due to a health condition rather than a past or current diagnosis or treatment for a mental health condition. See <https://drlornabreen.org/>. Will be done in 2026.
 - Support intentional conversations across the continuum of nursing. For example, develop a process for nurses to receive career coaching to all nurses with the assumption that all nurses are experiencing trauma and movement within the career is expected.
3. Examine possible implementation training on well-being in interdisciplinary program curriculums.
 4. Examine ways to promote a constructive, safe workplace in order to promote mental health and well-being. A possible step is for organizations to make health and wellness a fundamental priority and a component of the Joy in Work recognition program

Action Plan Summary

- Create a research library of related research on mental health and well-being
- Align the WABON CARES program with the Washington Physicians Health Program (WPHP).
- Require nursing education programs to include personal health and wellness education

Positive Work Environment Workgroup Key Strategies

Group Co-chairs:

- Antwinett O. Lee, EdD, MSN-CNS, RN, Educational Nurse Consultant/ AOLEE Consulting
 - Kathleen Mertens, DNP, MPH, RN, Associate Chief Nurse, Ambulatory Care and Population Health, Harborview Medical Center
 - DNP Student: Raquel Dixon
1. Develop a webpage/toolkit with information about how health care facilities and academic programs can implement the Joy in Work model in their organization with turn-key program. Develop a form for organizations to submit examples on how they have implemented the model for the webpage.

2. Develop a training for staff nurses, faculty and leaders to help implement the Joy in Work model as a local workplace wellness torchbearer. Recognize the torchbearers on a website.
3. Develop recognition membership and award program for health care facilities and academic programs that have implemented the Joy in Work model. Measure the implementation in these organizations and publish progress to provide for healthy competition.
4. Develop a Nursing Forward collaborative of nurses to share ideas for using technology to advance the profession, care, and reduce burnout by connecting with [Society for Nurse Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#), [NurseHack4health](#) and other organizations.

Action Plan Summary

- Increase Community Engagement, focusing on members who serve young adults
- Gather data and build a Joy in Work webpage with resources
- Develop a training module for promotion statewide

Recruit and Retain a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce Workgroup Key Strategies

Group Co-Chairs:

- Kumhee Ro, DNP, APRN, FAAN, FAANP, Associate Professor, Seattle University
- Fawzi Belal, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Associate, Washington Center for Nursing
- DNP Student: Jose Reyes

The group decided to merge with the WCN Nurse of Color Coalition as they have started working on similar goals. Future work will take place within the coalition.

WCN Nurses of Color Coalition Initial Goals:

1. Develop and implement programs to promote more nurses of color into leadership roles.
2. Enforce accountability for representation. Establish Clear Tracking Progress and accountability.
3. Expand pathways for undocumented and internationally educated nurses

Action Plan Summary

- Engage in WA Board of Nursing rulemaking to decrease barriers for Internationally Educated Nurses

- Invite workgroup participants to WCN Diverse Nurse Coalition program development to
 - promote nursing leadership roles for nurses of color
 - increase retention of diverse nurses in nursing education and other nursing roles

Measurement and Assessment Workgroup Key Strategies

Group Co-Chairs:

- Kyla Woodward, PhD, RN University of Washington
- Ian Mikusko, Strategic Researcher, Washington State Nurses Association

1. Utilize the Job Demand-Resources Theory as the theoretical framework to measure the impact of Washington’s burnout and retention strategies.
2. Develop a statewide mechanism/plan to collect data.
Possible steps:
 - Develop a map identifying who is collecting what data at each facility and see if they are willing to share their data.
 - How often do we need to collect the data? We need information from all of the healthcare settings. May need to just do a statewide survey.
 - Need to incentivize the survey. Look at offering a CE credit for completing the survey and watching a webinar. Would be measuring to determine impact of program and that could be an incentive to have those completed.
 - Need to articulate what we are going to do with the data. Share the data across organizations and relevant groups for continuous learning.
3. Incorporate measures to track the strategies from the other groups in the statewide data collection.

Action Plan Summary

- Assist work groups’ action plans by collaboratively developing evaluation approach and include in workgroup infographics:

Compliance, Regulation and Technology Workgroups

- Have organizations track documentation time before and after implementing strategies to measure impact.
- Have organizations track costs related to mandatory trainings and cost savings when reducing requirements

Mental Health and Well-Being Workgroup

- Assess options for establishing a statewide confidential mental health screening and referral program.

- Establish common quality assurance and performance measures between CARES and WPHP
- Develop measurement tools to assess the impact of WABON education and outreach efforts on increasing knowledge and reducing stigma
- Require nursing education programs to submit student mental health and wellness program descriptions along with defined quality measures

Positive Work Environments Workgroup

- Increase active workgroup committee participation to 10 members from across the state
- Workgroup collects data and successfully publishes Joy in Work© webpage toolkit
- Training is developed and shared around the state. Organizations and training participation is tracked.

Recruit and Retain a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce Workgroup

- Establish baseline data on internationally educated nurses then track how many internationally educated nurses Washington admits based on the new rule.
- Monitor disciplinary action on internationally educated nurses to identify reasons for discipline, in particular, English language proficiency.

ⁱ https://www.wcnursing.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/reports/2024-July_WCN-Burnout-and-Retention-Report_FINAL2.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://nam.edu/our-work/programs/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/cwb-change-makers/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://nam.edu/publications/national-plan-for-health-workforce-well-being/>