

Discussion

Name of Student

Institutional Affiliation

#### 4-2 Discussion

Nurses, encompassing both Registered Nurses (RNs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), play a pivotal role in healthcare not only as caregivers but also as key stakeholders in health policy development. Their direct interaction with patients and firsthand insights into the healthcare system equip them uniquely to influence policy-making effectively.

One significant opportunity for RNs and APRNs in policy-making is through membership and active participation in professional nursing organizations. These organizations often have policy committees or special interest groups focused on healthcare legislation (Chiu et al., 2021). By joining these groups, nurses can contribute to position statements or recommendations that directly influence health policy at local, state, and national levels. For instance, the American Nurses Association (ANA) regularly lobbies for policy changes that promote patient welfare and nursing practices.

Another pathway is through direct involvement in governmental advisory boards or task forces that focus on health policy. Nurses can apply for positions on these boards, bringing their clinical expertise to the policy-making process. It is crucial in shaping effective health policies that reflect real-world clinical settings and patient needs.

However, these opportunities come with challenges. The lack of time due to demanding work schedules and the need for substantial expertise in both healthcare and legislative processes are significant barriers. To overcome these, nurses can pursue further education in health policy or public health to prepare themselves for these roles. Additionally, healthcare institutions can support nursing involvement in policy-making by providing time allowances or incentives for those who engage in policy activities.

To advocate for and communicate these opportunities effectively, two strategies are paramount. First, professional nursing organizations should actively promote success stories

of nurses who have influenced policy, using platforms like social media, webinars, and conferences. It can inspire and educate nurses about the impact they can have beyond the bedside. Second, nursing education programs should incorporate policy education into their curricula, equipping future nurses with the knowledge and skills needed to engage in policy-making from the outset of their careers (Thomas et al., 2020). By embedding the importance of policy-making in nursing training, the profession can enhance its influence in health policy development, ensuring nurses are not only participants but leaders in shaping healthcare legislation.

## References

- Chiu, P., Cummings, G. G., Thorne, S., & Schick-Makaroff, K. (2021). Policy Advocacy and Nursing Organizations: A Scoping Review. *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice*, 22(4), 276–296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15271544211050611>
- Thomas, T., Martsolf, G., & Puskar, K. (2020). How to engage nursing students in health policy: Results of a survey assessing students' competencies, experiences, interests, and values. *Policy, Politics, & Nursing Practice*, 21(1), 12–20.

## Responses

Hello Gazelle,

You have raised an important point about the intimidation nurses might feel towards the complexity of policy-making. To further bridge this gap, additional opportunities for nurses to engage in policy-making could include structured mentorship programs within these associations. Experienced policy-making nurses could mentor newcomers, providing guidance and building confidence in their advocacy skills. Moreover, nursing associations could develop short, targeted training programs or workshops focused on specific areas of health policy. These programs would be designed to be accessible and manageable even for those with busy schedules, helping nurses gain the necessary skills and knowledge incrementally. Over time, these initiatives could demystify the policy-making process, making it more approachable for everyday practitioners.

Hi Moore,

You have raised an important point about the intimidation nurses might feel towards the complexity of policy-making. To further bridge this gap, additional opportunities for nurses to engage in policy-making could include structured mentorship programs within these associations. Experienced policy-making nurses could mentor newcomers, providing guidance and building confidence in their advocacy skills. Moreover, nursing associations could develop short, targeted training programs or workshops focused on specific areas of health policy. These programs would be designed to be accessible and manageable even for those with busy schedules, helping nurses gain the necessary skills and knowledge incrementally. Over time, these initiatives could demystify the policy-making process, making it more approachable for everyday practitioners.