

National League for Nursing Commitment Statement on Countering the US Opioid Epidemic

As the oldest nursing organization in the United States, the National League for Nursing (NLN) is committed to transforming nursing education to better prepare students to make a meaningful and sustainable impact on the opioid overdose epidemic and prevent future crises related to substance abuse disorders. The NLN promotes excellence in nursing education to build a strong and diverse nursing workforce to advance the health of the nation and the global community. The League represents more than 1,200 nursing schools, 40,000 members, and 25 regional constituent leagues.

Opioid misuse, dependence, and overdoses are on the rise, despite the many actions put in place to try to curb this crisis. Nurses are critical agents in treating these patients and are sometimes the sole providers of this care in medically underserved areas that struggle to recruit and retain providers and are hit hardest by this epidemic. They provide pain management, which helps reduce patients' reliance on opiates. Nurses also educate patients, families, and caregivers on how to assess and manage pain symptoms as well as how to safely use opioids.

The NLN has been active on substance use disorders and is committed to working with the National Academy of Medicine and other Collaborative partners to advance evidence-based and innovative solutions to alleviate the nation's opioid crisis. The NLN shares interest in the four focus areas of the Collaborative. The NLN commitments include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting access to holistic health care of patients and caregivers through the enhancement of substance use disorder services by local community health centers, neighborhood clinics, and nurse managed health clinics.
- Removing barriers and supporting policies for nurses to practice to the full extent of their education and preparation to treat substance use disorders.
- Education of the public and the health workforce to eliminate the stigmas associated with substance use disorder, pain, and treatment of these conditions.
- Supporting substance use disorder policies that recognize the dynamic and diverse needs of individuals, families, and communities within the nation.
- Supporting the maximization of education funding for health care professionals who commit to practice in rural and underserved areas where the drug overdose death rate is higher than the national average.
- Supporting research into and promoting evidence based strategies to improve prevention, treatment, and recovery outcomes for those affected by substance use disorders.
- Continuing ongoing NLN initiatives to improve the quality of care for vulnerable populations such as those with substance use disorders tailored to the unique needs of learners, faculty, and administrators as well as sharing this knowledge with our partners.

We look forward to joining forces with the National Academy of Medicine and the more than 55 other organizations to provide care for those involved and reverse the opioid epidemic.