



## RECOMMENDATION #4

### Expand the role of nurses in leadership, shared decision-making, and team communication

Nurses possess unique insights that are invaluable in shaping health care policies, improving care practices, and enhancing patient outcomes. The importance of elevating nurse expertise in the roles of leader, decision-maker, and communicator stems from several key considerations that address quality of care, operational efficiency of health care organizations, and the practice environment and culture.

**Leadership:** Nurses in leadership positions bring a wealth of clinical experience and empathy to decision-making processes, ensuring that strategies and policies are not only economically viable but also patient-centered. Nurse leaders are pivotal in driving changes that enhance patient care quality, safety, and satisfaction. Their leadership can ensure that the frontline perspective informs strategic directions for the organization. Research has shown that organizations with nurses in executive positions often experience improved patient outcomes, lower rates of complications, and enhanced staff satisfaction.<sup>40</sup>

**A 2023 survey of RNs found that 86% listed more nurse input into decision-making as one of the top five ways to reduce stress among nurses.**

-AMN Healthcare. *The Pandemic's Consequences*. <https://www.amnhealthcare.com/siteassets/amn-insights/surveys/amn-rnsurvey-2023-final.pdf>

**Shared Decision-Making:** Involving nurses in shared decision-making empowers them to fully engage in the practice of nursing, ensuring that decisions are made considering the holistic needs of patients. This collaborative approach to care planning and decision-making has been linked to improved patient outcomes and knowledge, higher patient and staff satisfaction, and a reduction in health care costs.<sup>41</sup> In addition, a 2023 survey of RNs found that 86% listed more nurse input into decision-making as one of the top five ways to reduce stress among nurses.<sup>28</sup>

**Team Communication:** Effective team communication is essential for the delivery of high-quality, coordinated patient care. Nurses often act as the cornerstone in health care teams by coordinating care and communicating vital information between patients, doctors, families, and other health care professionals. Fostering a culture where nurses are encouraged to voice their insights and concerns contributes to a more inclusive, collaborative, and safe health care environment. Studies have demonstrated that improved communication and teamwork among health care professionals are associated with significant reductions in adverse events and improved job satisfaction.<sup>42,43</sup>

The expansion of nurses into leadership roles, shared decision-making, and team communication is not just a matter of professional development but a strategic imperative for health care systems aiming to improve quality, efficiency, and patient satisfaction. This approach leverages the comprehensive skill set of nurses, ensuring that care delivery is both effective and reflective of the complex needs of patients. It signifies a shift toward more collaborative, interdisciplinary models of care where the expertise of each team member is valued and utilized to its fullest potential.

The Task Force on the Future of the Nursing Workforce recommends the following strategies to expand the role of nurses in leadership, shared decision-making, and team communication:

**Strategy 13** – Create robust systems that involve nurses as leaders in decision-making that impacts their work environment, patients, and the interprofessional team (Page 80)

**Strategy 14** – Improve communication and understanding within interprofessional care teams (Page 84)

#### Related Recommendations from Other Groups

**Nurse Staffing Task Force. *Nurse Staffing Task Force Imperatives, Recommendations, and Actions*. American Association of Critical-Care Nurses and American Nurses Association; 2023**

**Recommendation: Support the role of nurse leaders in creating and sustaining a healthy work environment.**