



Leadership corner

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Health disparities, quality and safety in the workplace, interprofessional practice and team science, victims of trauma and abuse, nursing education redesign – these are among the hot topics of the day. All these critical issues and more that are important to nursing warrant rapid dialogue among informed readers, and traditional modes of publishing cannot keep up with the pace of information available. Hearing from our thought leaders in the profession—in their own voices—help us decipher the noise from the realities of our rapidly changing healthcare systems.

Nursing thought leaders in these turbulent times are sought after by colleagues and the public for their wisdom and experience. Few are selected and honored as “LIVING LEGENDS” annually by the American Academy of Nursing distinguished leaders who have given service over their careers. These recognized scholars, policy makers, educators, researchers, and truly dedicated nurses received this recognition and inspired all of us with their living stories and leadership insights. We believe that their personal viewpoints about leadership ought to be shared online, offering their own perspectives, in their own words. We at Nursing Outlook have published interviews of these and other outstanding thought leaders, posted on the Nursing Outlook blog over the past 7 years. However, digital publishing today allows for multiple media and the transport of a portable medium, like paper, to convey messages from place to place. Print media has advantages but takes long to go from idea to delivery. “Agility” is needed to deliver contemporary arguments and electronic formats can prompt persuasive commentary for building consensus that is timely and substantive. Blogs and podcasts are increasingly providing a paperless platform for professionals to present and debate ideas in the socially connected evolving web. Maximizing both print and digital formats can be beneficial.

The Nursing Outlook blog, “3 Questions” online connects nurses with nursing leaders around focused topics that are important for the profession. Leadership Corner presents these interviews in print within the pages of Nursing Outlook to prompt the discussions and carry on the dialogue “online.” The interviews can be found online at <http://www.nursingoutlooktalk.com>.



Linda Burnes Bolton, DrPH, RN, FAAN
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2016 American Academy Living
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“Living Legend Award” for her many contributions in nursing and her extraordinary leadership roles and received the 2016 TRUST Award from the American Hospital Association for visionary leadership in healthcare. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, was President of the National Black Nurses Association, and is a Member of the California Strategic Planning for Nursing Committee on Diversity, the Institute for Nursing and Health Care and the National Advisory Council on Nursing Education and Practice. Among her many appointments, including chairing the Veterans Nursing Commission at the request of the U.S. Congress, she has served on other boards including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Of particular note, Dr. Burnes Bolton served as

Dr. Linda Burnes Bolton was the President of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). In 2016, she was recognized with the American Academy of Nursing’s

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vice chair of the RWJF Initiative on the *Future of Nursing* at the Institute of Medicine. Released in 2010, this report has been one of the most influential documents of our time. Dr. Burnes Bolton currently serves on a panel examining social isolation and loneliness organized by the National Academies of Science.

For over 20 years, Dr. Burnes Bolton has played a vital leadership role in raising issues of diversification in nursing education and practice. Her expertise includes nursing and patient care outcomes, cultural diversity and inclusion within the health professions, health equity, and population health.

We asked Dr. Burnes Bolton to inform us on what problems she believes are most likely to impact nursing and healthcare. Her numerous leadership recognitions make her an outstanding role model for aspiring nurse leaders on the major issues facing nursing leadership today. She points to several major issues and followed up with solutions to engage nurses in team science to achieve a “Culture of Health,” part of the RWJF vision and framework for improving health, equity, and well-being in America. (<https://www.rwjf.org/en/how-we-work/building-a-culture-of-health.html>)

We interviewed Dr. Bolton as a “Living Legend” and thought leader using our three Questions format!

Nursing Outlook Question 1. What are the major issues facing nursing leadership now and over the next 5 years?

Linda Burnes Bolton: The top issues facing nursing leadership are in some ways similar to the issues that we have faced in the last 20 years, and that is: how do we meet the growing demands of caring for patients? We are going to need a workforce that is more prepared to deliver clinical care and to be part of a team of individuals helping to engage consumers as equal partners in healthcare. That’s different from the demand that was focused on how many critical care nurses you have or how many pediatric nurses you have. We will need more nurses engaged in this work of population health management.

The second issue has to do with the aging of the workforce; how do we replace the leadership talent? We are coming to a period of time when a 20% of the workforce might be leaving and those are the individuals who have the most knowledge and experience. We need to ensure that we have a pipeline of people who are ready to take our places and to succeed us. And in that succession may come new effective leadership styles, nurses will pursue “best practices” for leading teams.

Nursing Outlook Question 2. How can nurse leaders advance the engagement of other health professionals to promote team science?

Linda Burnes Bolton: Team science is very important in terms of achieving health goals. It’s going to take more than nurses to achieve those health goals. We may be

the largest group of health professionals but like trying to describe a camel and having three blind men, each having their hands on different parts of the body, that’s exactly how it is in relationship to this work of engagement of other health professionals. Each comes with their own body of knowledge. Let’s take physical therapists as an example. The work that we’re doing to try to get more movement, physical movement, of consumers as a way of not only treating health issues that have arisen, but preventing health issues. Getting nurses and physical therapists together as team members and then adding a podiatrist, a physician member, creates a team that team approach produces optimized patient care. What a great team to be able to address the staggering information that we’re continuing to receive about how little people are engaged in walking, running, and other types of physical activities.

Another example has to do with the whole issue of science itself. On the road to discovery, it’s not something that should be just left to one particular clinician—so not just nurses. But how do nurses discover with physicians? How do the nurses discover with consumers? How do they discover with health educators? So, promoting team science is critical to the engagement of health professionals and the improvement of patient care outcomes. This is the kind of work nurse leaders should be pushing forward.

Nursing Outlook Question 3. How do we promote more consumer engagement in achieving a “Culture of Health”?

Linda Burnes Bolton: The work of health and health professionals is aimed at trying to improve outcomes for consumers. One of the things we haven’t done as good a job as we could, is adopting what Dr. Don Berwick promoted at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement: “Nothing about me without me!” People, patients, have to be partners in their well-being.

We aspire to a culture of health where everyone has the possibility to achieve and sustain health—regardless of their age, sex, their ethnicity, their sexual preferences, or their income. We can’t hope to achieve that for everyone without engaging the individuals who would benefit! So, consumer engagement is essential to achieving a culture of health while being mindful not just of diversity, but of inclusion. They’re a part of the discovery of the answers to the question: how do we achieve a culture of health?

Supplementary materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found in the online version at doi:[10.1016/j.outlook.2019.06.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2019.06.007).