

The ANA Innovation Engine: Activating Innovation Through Education and Communities of Practice

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May 31, 2023

DOI: 10.3912/OJIN.Vol28No02Man03

Article

Abstract

Nurses are leading and developing solutions to complex problems across healthcare. Through innovation, they can drive the future creation of additional innovative healthcare ecosystems and networks. The most recent *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* articulates the value of innovation to support approaches and methodologies that foster interprofessional collaborations to transform healthcare. Nurses must develop foresight and futures thinking leadership skills and advance creative ideas to design innovative 21st century healthcare systems. This article briefly reviews the vision, mission, and strategic initiatives of the ANA Enterprise Innovation Department and describes selected programs and strategies to support nurses as they actualize innovation leadership in contemporary healthcare contexts. Many opportunities for involvement are offered virtually. We conclude with a call to action to advance individual nurse-led innovation by seeking education, developing expanded skills, and joining the movement of nurses looking to reshape health, healthcare, and the nursing profession.

Redefining healthcare for the 21st century will require nurses to develop future-forward thought, employ greater creativity, and expand innovative thinking...

Redefining healthcare for the 21st century will require nurses to develop future-forward thought, employ greater creativity, and expand innovative thinking across dynamic and complex systems to activate positive change that advances health. The American Nurses Association (ANA) Innovation Department (hereafter referred to as ANA Innovation) works across the ANA Enterprise which encompasses three organizations: ANA, the American Nurses Foundation (ANF), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). These organizations collaborate to

achieve a shared vision and mission grounded in the values of trust, inclusivity, innovation, and empowerment. The vision of the ANA Enterprise is to, “create a healthy world through the power of nursing” and our mission is to, “lead the profession to shape the future of nursing and health care” ([ANA Enterprise, 2023](#), para. 1).

Nurses are leading and developing innovative solutions to complex problems across healthcare. This article briefly reviews the vision, mission and strategic initiatives of the ANA Enterprise Innovation and describes some of the programs, strategies, and tactics to actualize and support nurses as they operationalize innovation leadership in contemporary healthcare contexts. We conclude with a call to action for individual nurses to advance nurse-led innovation by expanding knowledge through innovation education, developing expanded skills, and joining the movement of nurses with a goal to reshape health, healthcare, and our profession.

ANA Enterprise Strategic Plan

The ANA Enterprise Strategic Plan actualizes the organizational vision, mission, and values with the goals and objectives outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. ANA Enterprise Strategic Goals and Objectives

Elevate the Profession of Nursing Globally	Evolve the Practice of Nursing to Improve Health and Healthcare	Ensure the Professional Success of Nurses
Lead the nursing profession to improve health through advocacy, philanthropy, practice, and innovation.	Advance diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism to improve nursing practice and work environments.	Magnify nurses' voices and advocate to overcome barriers to personal and professional success.
Evolve and promote standards of excellence, recognizing exemplary nurses and settings where they practice.	Engage and support social justice in nursing to address inequities in health.	Design and implement advanced solutions to meet the needs and priorities of nurses.
Champion the value of nursing to advance nursing's impact on health and society.	Develop the capacity for nurses to innovate and lead in dynamic and complex practice environments.	Co-create holistic approaches to nurses' well-being directly with nurses and through strategic partners.

ANA Enterprise, 2023

ANA is committed to expanding innovation across the profession by developing nurses and scaling nurse-led innovation. ANA Innovation has created a robust suite of education, initiatives, funding, and resources to activate and support the evolution of nurses, communities of practice, and learning in the healthcare innovation space. The team is changing the landscape of the nursing profession and healthcare by developing a broader understanding of innovative knowledge, tools, practices and resources, principles of human design, and foresight leadership. This broad scope helps nurses to gain insight and imagine new possibilities around strategies and approaches to improve the healthcare quality and experiences for all.

The team is changing the landscape of the nursing profession and healthcare...

Innovation Defined

ANA Innovation frames innovation work around the definition by Lachman et al, "the application of creativity or problem solving that results in a widely adopted strategy, product, or service that meets a need in a new and different way. Innovations are about improvement in quality, cost effectiveness, or efficiency" (2006, p.205). To realize the vision and mission of the ANA Enterprise, it is necessary to create movement around innovation through coordinated communities of practice invested in shaping the future of nursing and healthcare through nurse-led innovation.

Communities of practice share best practices and create new knowledge to advance various domains of the professional practice.

Communities of Practice

A community of practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic and who come together to fulfill both individual and group goals (Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium, 2016; Wenger-Trainer & Wenger-Trainer, 2015). Communities of practice share best practices and create new knowledge to advance various domains of the professional practice. A community of learners is a group of people who support each other in their collective and individual learning. They are cooperative and can work productively together. Individually, they are motivated and strive to do quality work. ANA Innovation is dedicated to creating, supporting, and sustaining communities of practice at the national, state, organizational, and community levels to advance nurse led innovations and new ways of thinking across healthcare.

Practice Standards for Innovation

The most recently revised *Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (ANA, 2021) underscores the need for nurses to incorporate innovative practice and methodologies to promote health and human functioning, the care of individuals, and improved quality outcomes. The nurse-patient caring relationship connotes that, "interventions reflecting caring consciousness may require innovation and creativity" (ANA, 2021, p. 9). Nurses who create new solutions and promote a culture of innovation incorporate competencies associated with creativity, spanning boundaries, change management, considered risk-taking, and failure tolerance (ANA, 2021).

Innovation thinking and leadership are embedded in additional standards and competencies that acknowledge the need for innovative knowledge and skills. Several examples (ANA, 2021) include:

- Standard 4 *Planning*: The nurse develops a collaborative plan to achieve healthy outcomes by designing innovative nursing practices that can be incorporated into the plan (p. 80).
- Standard 12 *Leadership*: Nurses lead within the profession and practice setting by embracing practice innovations and role performance to achieve lifelong personal and professional goals (p. 97).
- Standard 14 *Scholarly Inquiry*: The nurse integrates scholarship, evidence, and research findings into practice by utilizing innovative approaches to contribute to quality outcomes (p. 101).

- Standard 17 *Resource Stewardship*: The nurse utilizes resources that are safe, effective, and financially responsible by designing collaborative and innovative strategies to use resources effectively to maintain quality and reduce waste (p. 106).

National Leadership

To accelerate innovation leadership among nurses, the ANA has created the position of Vice President of Nursing Innovation. The role of the nurse in this position is to create, develop, lead, and manage this national innovation work. Dr. Oriana Beaudet (first author) assumed this position in December 2019. This work encompasses a deep honoring of historical innovations driven by nurses, the activation of present-day nurses, and creating a path forward to evolve the nursing profession. Beaudet noted,

This work will include building an inclusive and transparent space to ensure the ability for nurses to lead at all levels of society – thereby transforming practice and the health of people across the continuum of care. Nursing has a rich history of creativity and inventing solutions to meet the needs of the people and communities they serve. Innovation is a catalyst and keystone between our profession's past and future. It is my sincere belief that nurses can create solutions to some of the greatest challenges of our time ([ANA, 2019](#), para. 3).

To grow innovation across nursing and healthcare, ANA Innovation has used a collaborative process with multiple stakeholders to create the following core principles that guide the ANA nursing innovation ethos:

- Transparency
- Democracy
- Abundance
- Opportunities for Growth
- Interprofessional + Transdisciplinary Collaboration
- Antiracist + Design Justice Principles (e.g., justice, equity, diversity, inclusion)
- Improve the Present While Being Future Focused

Nurse innovators will benefit from a healthcare ecosystem that is transparent through a culture of openness for the advancement of innovative ideas, and fosters democracy in the influential promotion of equal rights and the enhancement of quality shared decision-making. A culture of innovation leads to an abundance of opportunities not yet realized and fosters interprofessional and transdisciplinary collaboration that generates an integrated approach. Encompassing a broad range of ideas and political actions which counter systemic racism, and the oppression of specific racial groups is essential to the foundational innovation principles. These principles must be articulated to convey the advancement of healthy communities, standards of practice, and the broadening scope of the profession of nursing through several key concepts, such as foresight, creativity, and innovation

Keys to Advance Practice

As the complexity of healthcare increases, the act of providing care will intensify. Complex care necessitates greater levels of foresight, creativity, and innovation to navigate care delivery and practice. To advance practice, nurses will have to build new knowledge; create dynamic ways to educate; and extend the reach, service, and impact of individual disciplines across healthcare and for a greater good ([Pesut, 2013](#)). It is critical for nurses to and use foresight and *futures thinking* leadership, to value creativity, and to build and prepare their understanding of innovation to specifically advance the nursing profession, and healthcare in general ([Pesut, 1997; 2019](#)). This section discusses these intertwined concepts as opportunities to advance practice.

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Foresight and Futures Thinking

Robert Johansen ([2012; 2017](#)) has addressed foresight by noting that leaders make the future when they have clarity of purpose. He outlines ten future leadership skills, and five different kinds of literacy leaders need. He notes it is vital that leaders look backward from the future and act in the now. Rather than continue to dialogue and debate about a VUCA world (i.e., volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous). Johansen challenges us to consider another frame of reference for VUCA: vision, understanding, clarity, and agility.

Foresight is a way of thinking about and preparing for the unknown.

Foresight is a way of thinking about and preparing for the unknown. It is the ability to predict, or the action of predicting, what will happen or what is needed in the future. An aspect of future studies is a pattern-based understanding of the past and present, to determine the likelihood of future events and trends. Futures studies are prospective thinking that postulates possible (i.e., what can or could be), probable (i.e., what is likely to be), and preferable (i.e., what ought to be) futures ([Bell, 2003](#)).

Webb (2016) discussed how chaos theory coupled with complex adaptive systems thinking prevents us from finding singular or isolated solutions, which can lead to a set of possible, probable, and preferred scenarios, using trends as anchors. She believes that key aspects of futures thinking and forecasting are an openness to recognize and act on trends with logic and creativity. This requires skill to monitor and evaluate consequences of trends and weak signals which are often detected at the fringe of an industry, organization, or society.

Not everyone enjoys contemplating the future or finding fringe patterns. Thinking about the future requires courage to be aware of, allow, and embrace change. Future thinking forces one to assess, evaluate, and act on complex concepts and ideas which create anxiety, fear, and distress (Webb, 2016). Foresight leadership requires attention to the emergence of weak signals and trends. Webb (2016) defined a trend as a new manifestation of sustained change within an industry, which is timely but persists.

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According to Webb (2016), trends converge with everyday life and are driven by human needs or behaviors. Trends start at the fringe of society and evolve. Such understanding involves foresight leadership. Just as there are several types of innovation mind sets, research has suggested differences in foresight styles (Pesut, 2018).

Trends start at the fringe of society and evolve.

Natalie Dian (2009) developed a foresight style assessment based on an individual's time orientation, propensity for dual or holistic thinking orientation, and individual preferences for structure and activity. She defined six foresight styles: 1) futurist, 2) activist, 3) opportunist, 4) flexist, 5) equilibrist, and 6) reactionist. Table 2 offers a brief overview of the six foresight styles.

Table 2. Dian's Foresight Styles

Style	Description
Futurist	Futurists tend to think in terms of 5-20 years or more. They look for perspective and try to see the whole picture. Futurists frame things through a systems thinking lens and aspire to create the best possible future, rendering scenarios or future possibilities.
Activist	Activists introduce new ideas and innovations into a system. They commit to create change in the service of making things better. Activists are inspired by the visions of the futurists.
Opportunist	Opportunists try to change the future by making sure the present is possible. Short term goals and fads support an opportunist's advancement.
Flexist	Flexists are grounded in the present and open to new innovations that enhance survival.
Equilibrist	Equilibrists work in the present and see survival as a matter of balance and keeping an organization running. They work to integrate new ideas into existing systems.
Reactionist	Reactionists protect and sustain organizations and are wary of change. They are likely to advocate and support the status quo because the unknown risks are survival threats. Reactionists can stop change and force people in the organization to consider the downsides of new ideas.

(Dian, 2009).

Building on Dian's work Jay Gary (2009) conducted factor analysis on data derived from the foresight styles assessment. In Gary's research, four principal component factors emerged. He named these factors: Framer, Adapter, Tester, and Reactor. Framers ask larger questions about the future through exploration and inquiry about long term issues that define the future. Adapters adjust to situations when they realize the future demands it. Testers track, experiment, and adopt new trends and put them to use. Reactors preserve their position against threats or forced change.

How does knowledge of foresight style influence one's leadership and management practices? More importantly, what is your personal foresight style? Are you a Futurist, Activist, Opportunist, Flexist, Equilibrist, or Reactionist? Are you a Framer, Adapter, Tester, or Reactor? It is important to become aware of one's own style and the styles of people with whom you work. Mastering the skills of foresight leadership enables one to appreciate and value all perspectives in service of creating a desired future within any industry or organization.

In addition to styles, foresight leadership is sustained by self-agency and literacies of awareness, authenticity, audacity, adaptability, and an orientation towards action (Ratcliffe & Ratcliffe, 2015). Such literacies support leadership resilience (Allison-Napolitano & Pesut, 2015) and foster foresight, creativity, and innovation leadership in nursing.

Creativity and Innovation

Paul Plsek (1997; 2001; 2013) has made the case for bringing creativity and innovation into quality improvement efforts in healthcare. Plsek (1997) defined creativity as “. . . the connecting and rearranging of knowledge—in the minds of people who allow themselves to think flexibly—to generate new, often surprising ideas that others judge to be useful” (p.28). Plsek noted, “Innovation is the first, practical, concrete implementation of an idea done in a way that brings broad-based, extrinsic recognition to an individual or organization” (Plsek, 1997, p. 29). He offered five factors driving the need for creativity and innovation in organizations today:

- Superior long-term financial performance is associated with innovation.
- Customers are demanding innovation.
- Competitors are getting better at copying past innovations.
- New technologies enable innovation.
- What used to work does not anymore.

Jeff Degraff and Shawn Quinn (2006), in their book on jumpstarting an innovation engine, write about the innovation genome. The innovation genome is the process of managing and negotiating competing values of creation, competition, control, and collaboration through aligning people, practices, and purpose. Degraff and Quinn (2006) outlined seven steps to activate the innovation genome: 1) synthesize, 2) strategize, 3) socialize, 4) supervise, 5) synchronize, 6) specialize, and 7) systemize. Synthesizing involves assessment of organizational purpose considering capabilities, culture, and competencies. Strategizing creates a vision for the future and a road map that leads to that vision. Socializing is the process of establishing shared values and shared vision among leadership team members. Supervising is related to the development of facilitators who can lead and sustain change and innovation. Synchronization is related to operationalizing the vision among leaders in the organization. Specialize is the development of action teams to jump start change and innovation. Systematizing is the process of reviewing and revising projects and organizational practices in service of learning.

In sum, let us consider how these key concepts intertwine. Nurses are already navigating the complexity of healthcare ecosystems. These interconnected networks are comprised of stakeholders such as patients; healthcare professionals and providers; healthcare organizations and facilities; industry partners and startups; and payers, including community and government entities working collaboratively to provide healthcare services with a focus on access to care, quality of care, and decreased costs. ANA is utilizing its national platform to develop nurses as future-focused, creative, innovation leaders who are positioned to advance health across every aspect of contemporary broader healthcare ecosystems through nurse-led innovation.

Innovation is complemented by attention to the future and the cultivation of foresight through future studies. What is so significant and important about the ANA Innovation enterprise is the systematic way the organization is building innovation capacities through strategic and systematic structures, processes, and a focus on desired outcomes. Avedis Donabedian (1980; 2022) is well known for his structure, process, outcome model of quality care. Supporting innovation in nursing will require structures and processes to support desired outcomes

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Clarity about objectives, team participation and action steps support the innovation engine in an organization (Degraff & Quinn, 2006). Innovation requires attention to both creativity and risk taking. The innovation genome of the ANA Enterprise began with the creation of a national advisory board and innovation subcommittees. Following is a description of the structures, processes, and selected outcomes of the ANA Innovation efforts to date.

Innovation Advisory Board and Innovation Committees

Innovation Advisory Board

The ANA Innovation Advisory Board is composed of 15-20 representatives from industry; academia; philanthropic and funding space; and the broader healthcare ecosystem communities to offer a comprehensive range of perspectives, experiences, and skills. These innovation leaders provide thought leadership and strategic guidance to the ANA Vice-President of Nursing Innovation.

Innovation Advisory Committees

To build communities of practice, national calls seek Innovation Advisory Committee (IAC) members. IAC members are people who are interested in advancing nurse-led innovation, while building their own innovation knowledge around

foresight, systems thinking, and the healthcare ecosystem. They are committed to create and build resources and tools for nurses working across the United States. Seven IACs focus on these domains:





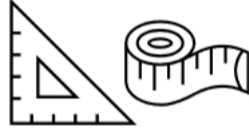

- Business, Entrepreneurship, and Intrapreneurship
- Data Science, AI, Augmented Intelligence
- Education and Communication
- New Care Delivery Models (Nursing and APRN Models)
- Planetary and Global Health
- Policy and Determinants of Health Equity
- Medical Technology and Devices

The IAC structure creates a space where experts and those interested in building and growing their own innovation expertise can build communities of practice ready to collaborate on behalf of the nursing profession.

IAC communities of practice consistently share best practices and establish new knowledge to advance the domain of professional practice.

IAC communities of practice consistently share best practices and establish new knowledge to advance the domain of professional practice. Future outcomes can be influenced by collective action and anticipatory adaptation (Monsen et al. 2022; Pesut, 1997; 2019). For example, throughout 2022, committee members have examined industry trends and completed an environmental scan of the healthcare landscape using the University of Houston Framework for Thinking about the Future (Hines & Bishop, 2012; Hines et al., 2007), a high-level scheme that categorizes the main types of activities that comprise strategic foresight for thinking about the future. Subcommittees then considered the six concepts in the framework (see Figure 1) as they might apply to nursing practice.

Figure 1. University of Houston Framework

Framework For Thinking About The Future					
					
Framing	Scanning	Forecasting	Visioning	Planning	Acting
Scoping the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude • Audience • work environment • Rationale • Purpose • Objectives • Teams 	Collecting Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System history • Context of issue • Scan for information regarding the future of the issue 	Describing baseline and alternative futures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers • Uncertainties • Tools • Diverging & converging approaches • Alternatives 	Choosing a preferred future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of the forecast • Envisioning designed outcomes 	Organizing to achieve the vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy • Options • Planning 	Implementing the plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating results • Developing action agendas • Institutionalizing strategic thinking and intelligence systems.
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Focal Issue	Information	Baselines & Alternative Futures	Preferred Future	Strategy & Plans	Actions

(Hines & Bishop, 2012; Used with permission)

Innovation Resource Guidebooks

The IACs have created eight content area specific resource guides for nurses to advance individual innovation initiatives. To ensure an inclusive process, all nurses can submit resources, articles, and information for the IAC members to consider through a website link and crowd-sourcing process.

The innovation guides (ANA, n.d.b) are a compilation of government, academic, and industry resources based on the current and future state of nursing practice. The innovation guidebooks can be accessed by any nurse through the ANA Innovation Enterprise (ANA, n.d.a) website.

Ratcliffe (2015) concluded that there would be a need for new ways of thinking when envisioning the future. Feedback from IAC members highlights that the experience of participating in a national innovation committee has created support for their innovation endeavors, broadened their innovation knowledge, provided an opportunity for innovation collaboration,

The wide range of nursing perspectives from various workplace settings has offered robust and meaningful virtual discussions...

and strengthened their innovation network. Described below are other additional initiatives from across the ANA Innovation engine, several of which are accessible on virtual platforms, to support nurses interested in leading through innovation.

Other Innovation Engine Initiatives

ANA Innovation Community Members

ANA has engaged an online innovation community of learning and practice, which represents an important virtual opportunity for nurses. To date over 11,000 nurses interested in innovation practice, research, and leadership have subscribed to this member community. Since October 2021, the innovation community has created an open dialogue by utilizing a discussion board. Hundreds of posts highlight multiple aspects of innovation practice and promote learning by sharing relevant triumphs and struggles. Thoughtful posts have focused on the nursing shortage, the importance of mentorship, and successful approaches to cultivating a culture of innovation. The wide range of nursing perspectives from various workplace settings has offered robust and meaningful virtual discussions that span geographic, practice, and professional environments. A virtual one-hour monthly meet up, *Espresso Yourself*, was created for the Innovation community members to provide open dialogue to build relationships network and discuss topics related to innovation practice.

Innovation Accelerator

The art and science of the nursing process requires nurses to embrace innovation and creativity to address current and future healthcare complexities (ANA, 2021). In 2022, ANA completed a beta test of a free three-month innovation accelerator for nurses who had participated in the 2021 ANA innovation awards and NursePitch™ events. The Innovation Accelerator (ANA, n.d.d) was offered as an opportunity for nurses to advance their innovation knowledge, collaborate with fellow nurses interested in innovation, and practice pitching ideas to receive valuable feedback. After beta testing the ANA Innovation Accelerator, a plan was initiated to expand this experience with increased content and broader opportunities for participation. In alignment with the most recent ANA (2021) Scope and Standards of Practice, the Innovation Accelerator positions nurses to gain innovative knowledge, skills, and abilities to infuse into traditional and non-traditional work environments.

At this time, the ANA Innovation accelerator is the only accelerator created specifically for nurses and nursing students outside of an academic environment.

With the realization that now, more than ever, nurses need to master the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the development and mastery of an innovation mindset (Cusson et al., 2020), the 2023 ANA Innovation Accelerator (ANA, n.d.d) was expanded to a free nine-month experience. A national call for participants was advertised and participation was expanded to include nurse educators, nurses of color, nursing students, and members of the ANA Innovation Community. At this time, the ANA Innovation accelerator is the only accelerator created

specifically for nurses and nursing students outside of an academic environment.

Historically, innovation accelerators have been created and adapted for individuals in engineering, technology, business, and entrepreneurial roles. The ANA Innovation Accelerator (ANA, n.d.d) provides a bridge between what is needed and the current reality of nursing education and practice. As nurses have routinely been overlooked from participating in innovation endeavors (Barr et al., 2021), and healthcare organizations may not have the structure to generate and develop innovative ideas (Albert, 2018), the ANA Innovation Accelerator is imperative to advance nurse-led ideas and innovation; opportunities for innovation collaboration and networking; and the potential to scale innovative initiatives with potential to improve the healthcare ecosystem.

Innovation Incubator

The Innovation Incubator was launched to support smaller, more nuanced work with individuals, teams, healthcare groups, and organizations. This work is highly specific and usually targets precise needs within each group. The ANA Innovation team directly determines these initiatives.

Funding Opportunities

Innovation has become foundational to achieve competitive advantage (Van de Ven, 1986; Zhou, 2006). Thus, organizations have a vested interest in maintaining a focus on employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (Subramaniam & Youndt, 2005). A study by Minor et al. (2017) examined the relationship between the ideation rate and several publicly reported financial metrics of 28 public companies between 2014 and 2016. The findings reported a significant correlation between the ideation rate at these companies and growth in profit or net income. To ensure continued advancement of nurse-led innovations, funding opportunities need to be amplified and integrated into nursing schools, healthcare organizations, and patient practice settings.

Innovation Awards

Nurses are continuously innovating to address challenges across healthcare. Mentorship, resources, and support are necessary to advance nurse-led healthcare innovations to the next stage (Kagan et al., 2021). The ANA Innovation Awards, sponsored by Stryker, offer a \$25,000 individual and a \$50,000 team award for nurse-led innovations that improve patient

safety and outcomes. Innovation award winners have designed products to decrease hospital acquired infections and ensure patient safety; new education models and devices; technologies enhanced by artificial intelligence; new medical devices; new nursing care models and business structures; and community health models that address social and economic barriers. Since the inception of the ANA innovation Award, \$375,000 dollars have been awarded to advance the innovations of nurses and improve healthcare outcomes.

NursePitch™ and Innovation Sandbox

Additional funding opportunities include NursePitch™ and the Innovation Sandbox. NursePitch™ is an interactive event featuring nurses who want to share creative solutions and innovations around a medical device or technology; an organizational or process improvement; a care delivery model; a business, program, or service; research; or an educational intervention. Nurses can pitch ideas for funding to support further development. The ANA NursePitch event has awarded \$75,000 to fund nurse-led innovations. The ANA Innovation Sandbox provides micro-funding to very early-stage ideas of nurses and pre-licensure nursing students and is unique because financing for ideas at this stage is not often available from well-known funding agencies and organizations.

Innovation Newsletter, Blogs, Lounges, and Podcasts

Providing visibility to highlight exemplars of nurse-led innovation is critical to support past, present, and future nurse innovators. Although they have been innovating for centuries ([Lemberger, 2022](#)), "nurses do not see often themselves as innovators" ([Kagan et al., 2021, Background, para. 2](#)). The inability of nurses to self-identify as innovators may be related to a lack of innovation in nursing curricula, the absence of nurse-led innovation initiatives in healthcare settings, and the lack of effective dissemination of nurse-led innovations.

Although they have been innovating for centuries, "nurses do not often see themselves as innovators".

ANA is committed to the effective dissemination of nurse-led innovation through various multi-modal media mechanisms, including newsletters, blogs, lounges, and podcasts. The *Gutsy Newsletter* allows nurses to connect with nurse innovators from across the country who are designing, leading, and building new possibilities for health creation and healthcare. These *#gutsynurses* share insights, challenges, and helpful hints to address barriers; what brings them joy; and how they stay the course during the process.

ANA Innovation Lounges provide an opportunity to join interactive conversations designed to build the innovative skills of nurses. The lounges create a space for nurses to expand their thinking about the profession and connect with nursing colleagues. The Innovation Lounges foster inspiration by highlighting case studies of how nurses are forging new paths and driving innovation across different aspects of the healthcare ecosystem, while encouraging them to develop and act on their ideas.

The *See You Now Podcast* is an inspiring storytelling podcast that reveals innovative and human-centered solutions for nurses to address some of healthcare's most challenging problems. The *See You Now Podcast*, a partnership between ANA and Johnson and Johnson, is the only nursing podcast that supports the professional development of nurses by offering continuing education hours. These dissemination platforms provide stories to guide, inspire, motivate, and affirm the importance of nurse-led innovations and the importance of innovative thinking to transform healthcare and health outcomes. See figure 2 for data to reflect member engagement in ANA innovation initiatives.

The lounges create a space for nurses to expand their thinking about the profession and connect with nursing colleagues.

The ANA Innovation team routinely provides keynotes and endnotes for industry and organizational conferences and events. The innovation cited below is directly correlated to innovation education available via online webinars. Informal innovation education not captured in the metrics below related to content provided to learning communities, through innovation guidebooks, and through innovation lounges.

Figure 2. Innovation Data

ANA Innovation Engine Engagement Data From 2020-2022	
ANA Innovation Community Members	11,000+
<i>See You Now Podcast</i> CNE Hours Awarded	14,500+
<i>See You Now Podcast</i> Downloads + Streams	1.4 Million+

ANA Innovation Engine Engagement Data From 2020-2022	
Funding Awarded to Date for ANA Innovation Awards + NursePitch™	\$460,000+
Nurses Actively Engaged with ANA Innovation	237,000+
National Awards Received	5
Nurses Educated (innovation webinars)	19,900+
Speaking Events (industry and organizational keynotes and endnotes)	48
Innovation Award Applicants Who Stated the Innovation Award Process Advanced Their Work	70%

Source: ANA Internal Data. Used with permission.

A Call to Action: Strategic Directions and Future Aspirations

This article has described many of the initiatives created by the ANA Innovation Engine. The leadership at ANA is committed to the development of a community of practice and learning related to innovation and foresight. Recall that communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor.

There are many virtual opportunities for nurses to participate.

Communities develop their practice through a variety of activities like problem solving, requests for information, seeking experience, reusing assets, coordination, and constructive collaboration. Through these activities, the members build an argument, grow confidence, and discuss new developments using formal and informal learning. While there are several initiatives at the

professional level, innovation is best practiced at the individual level. Consider the following opportunities a call to action to advance and build a personal innovation knowledge, learning, and action agenda:

- **Engage in the ANA Innovation Community**

Nurses can advance their innovative ideas by collaborating and ideating with fellow nurse innovators. Building an innovation community of practice promotes a sense of unity and belonging, especially for those who may be innovating in isolation. There are many virtual opportunities for nurses to participate.

- **Subscribe/Download the See you Now Podcast**

The *See You Now Podcast* ([ANA, n.d.c](#)) amplifies the experiences of nurses who are driving transformational change in healthcare and patient outcomes. It is an opportunity to feel excited and motivated about the limitless possibilities to scale and sustain nurse-led solutions and innovations.

- **Explore the ANA Innovation Resource Guidebooks**

Consider participating in the Innovation Advisory Committees (IAC). These committees have curated resources to ignite your ideas, propel your work forward, and spark action. Innovation Resource Guidebooks ([ANA, n.d.a](#)) are resources that enable nurses to navigate, lead, and respond to multi-faceted problems. Nurses can explore and share these resources with colleagues to promote innovative practices and initiatives.

- **Participate in the ANA Innovation Accelerator**

By participating in the ANA Innovation Accelerator ([ANA, n.d.d](#)) nurses can build a community of resources and support while creating positive change in healthcare through innovative practices. This free nine-month accelerator invites nurses and nursing students to explore content areas focused on human-centered design, business models, entrepreneurship/intrapreneurship, intellectual property, and leadership.

- **Conduct an Environmental Scan**

Nurses can conduct an environmental scan to identify resources, factors, and trends that may impact the uptake and sustainability of innovation practice. New nurse-led possibilities may be realized as nurses consider and utilize the ANA innovation offerings as a template and adapt them to fit a wide variety of organizational settings.

- **Enroll in Innovation Courses/ Webinars**

Nurses can foster their innovation knowledge by examining various schools of nursing with innovation programs ([American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2022](#); [ANA, n.d.e](#)). Other opportunities to engage in innovation education include the *Navigate Nursing -Innovation Webinars*, free to ANA members ([ANA, n.d.a](#)). These webinars focus on nursing influence and nurse entrepreneurship; they are available to all nurses and include the opportunity to earn free CNE.

Before the pandemic nursing programs were starting to explore innovation and design. During the pandemic the majority of these initiatives were discontinued – we are now seeing new trends of blended programs (nursing/architecture, nursing/engineering, nursing/ai, etc.).

Summary

Nurses are the connectors and translators of information across healthcare. Through innovation, they can drive the future creation of additional innovative healthcare ecosystems and networks. They can lead a focus on sustainable designs to improve quality of care, healthcare access, and interconnected care environments which flex to the dynamic needs of people and resources. Initiatives to decrease fragmentation, improve efficiency, and build value-based care models that enhance shared goals for all stakeholders through the use of technology and data sharing can advance health and enhance the human experience.

Nurses are the connectors and translators of information across healthcare.

The American Nurses Association is prioritizing innovation across the nursing profession. Nurses are critical to the health of our country, and it is their foresight, creativity, and innovation that will create impactful and meaningful change in healthcare now and into the future. The ANA Innovation initiatives position nurses with tools to lead into that future, drive much needed innovation, and to transform health and healthcare in the United States and beyond.

We encourage you to take advantage of these resources and educational opportunities. Tap into communities of practice or funding opportunities to build the healthcare systems that nurses know should exist. These resources are freely available to all nurses and nursing students. The authors invite you to join the nurse-led innovation movement!

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Citation: Beaudet, O., Pesut, D., Lemberger, O., (May 31, 2023) "The ANA Innovation Engine: Activating Innovation Through Education and Communities of Practice" *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* Vol. 28, No. 2, Manuscript 3.

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