



**2022-2024
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**POSITION STATEMENT
ZERO TOLERANCE TO MIGRANT NURSE EXPLOITATION**

The Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) firmly believes in advocating to protect the rights of internationally educated nurses (IEN) migrating to the United States, particularly newly arrived Filipino nurses. The *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services* (HHS) study projected that the demand for registered nurses would hit more than 3.6 million by 2030. On top of the existing workforce, the field would have needed to add nearly 50,000 new registered nurses each year since 2014 to meet that demand. ^[1] The Philippines is the largest exporter of nurses worldwide. For many decades, the country has consistently supplied Filipino nurses globally to countries experiencing nurse shortages such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Middle East, Australia, and New Zealand. ^[2]

While IENs can strengthen the nursing workforce, this can only happen if they are appropriately trained and provided with equal opportunities based on best-practice contract, standardized onboarding, and orientation processes in their area of practice and employment. In one recent case, newly recruited Filipino nurses resigned before the culmination of their contracts, which resulted in legal action by the employer. PNAA received similar stories from various sources in different parts of the country raising an alarming concern for the welfare of our nurses. Upon further investigation, the reasons for the resignation were unhealthy working environment. Some of the conditions cited by the nurses were: inadequate new employee orientation and acculturation; substandard working conditions; inappropriate staffing; poor nurse-patient ratio; failure to pay overtime wages; absence of health insurance; and unsafe floating practices between long-term and acute care settings, to name a few. These toxic work environments resulted in anxiety and panic attacks, mental breakdown, fear of losing their license, fear of clinical errors, restricted productivity, burn-out and turn over which, in isolation or collectively, can adversely affect patient care and increased hospital cost.

Since PNAA's inception as an organization, we have advocated on behalf of migrant nurses and collaborated with multi-agency stakeholders for a fair migration and ethical recruitment process and employment practices, such as the American Nurses Association on Standards and Scope of Practice, International Council of Nurses, Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment Practices' Health Care Code for Ethical Recruitment and Employment Practices, World Health Organization's Code of Global Practice, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and the US Fair Labor Standards Act. Our unified organizational goal to promote fair treatment of IENs in their migration and professional journey aims that all nurses are treated with respect, to be able to carry out their full practice potential safely and effectively, as licensed registered nurses within their scope and definition by their respective State Board of Nursing.



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This advocacy ultimately ensures a safe and harm-free working environment that protects vulnerable patients in receiving efficient, quality, care delivery. This combination of efforts, fortified by solid advocacy, needs full attention by our nursing community, healthcare executives, recruiters, patient advocate groups, government agencies, and policymakers as the healthcare system will continue to depend on immigrant nurses to fill the growing nursing shortage crisis globally. The collaboration across diverse stakeholder groups and the variety of legal, professional, civil, and global efforts to promote employment opportunity that is fair, equal, and equitable for IENs and immigrant nurses need further reform.

In conclusion, PNAA strongly advocates for zero tolerance of internationally educated nurses labor exploitation regardless of country of origin. PNAA will continue to work collaboratively with multi-agencies and key stakeholders towards a model of healthcare delivery that has the public's trust and prioritize the needs of vulnerable population for a safe, cost-effective, and quality-driven health system that promotes and advances health equity for all.^[3]

[1] Bureau of Labor Statistics

[2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

[3] Shaffer F, Bakhshi M, Jacobs A. Advocating to Protect Our Nurses: Addressing Unethical Recruitment of Foreign-Educated Nurses. *Nurse Adm Q.* 2018 Apr/Jun;42(2):107-114. Doi: 10.1097/NAQ.0000000000000274. PMID: 29360678.

Submitted By: Legislative Committee 2022-2024

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Reviewed and Approved By: Dr. Leticia Hermosa – PNAA Legal Adviser

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