

Members of the National Association of Neonatal Nurses support efforts to promote racial equity

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More than 90% of the active members of the National Association of Neonatal Nurses (NANN) believe the organization should pursue racial

equity work, [and many have specific suggestions for a strategic plan.](#)

This feedback comes from the survey results the association released this month in its journal, *Advances in Neonatal Care*.

"Neonatal care has advanced significantly in recent years, yet racial health inequities persist in the [neonatal intensive care unit](#) (NICU), with infants from racial and ethnic minority groups less likely to receive recommended treatment," Ashlee J. Vance, Ph.D., MA, RN, RNC-NIC, Assistant Scientist in the Center for Health Policy and Health Services Research at Henry Ford Health in Detroit, and co-authors note.

"Thus, we as an organization have a responsibility to help improve care, and the first step was to understand how this issue is perceived from the NANN membership base."

As a first step in developing a response to [health disparities](#), discrimination, and racism in the NICU, the NANN Board of Directors conducted an online, anonymous survey of active members in January 2021. The survey included 12 questions related to racial equity initiatives.

Of the 325 members who completed the survey, 83% were white, 96% were female, 42% were staff nurses, and 69% had been in the profession more than 16 years. Most (69%) said they were familiar with NANN's 2020 position statement "[Racial Disparity in the NICU](#)," but only 34% reported that their NICU or workplace had adopted initiatives recommended in the statement.

Dr. Vance and co-authors analyzed and summarized responses, and "based on membership feedback, were able to provide a summary of recommendations that can be used at the local, state, and national level." Most members supported having NANN take steps to improve equity

and diversity, making specific suggestions about how to build awareness, provide outreach and education, and promote historically marginalized voices.

Dr. Vance and her co-authors condensed the many comments into five principal recommendations:

1. Prioritize research initiatives that inform trainings, expand awareness of disparities that affect NICU patients, and suggest how NICUs can review their own data to address bias and outcomes.
2. Provide free or low-cost continuing education credits, trainings, case studies, webinars, and train-the-trainer workshops, and create tools and scripts about culturally respectful conversations.
3. Provide diversity data about NANN members and create timed, measurable goals to increase diversity among membership, NANN leadership, and [board members](#), with attention to socioeconomic status, education level, geographic region, and sexual orientation as well as race/ethnicity.
4. Offer scholarships toward membership and/or conference attendance and provide childcare during conferences.
5. Ensure NANN communications portray an inclusive and diverse population of families/infants.

"With the support of its members, NANN can make a difference by continuing to increase attention, promote local initiatives, and make substantive organizational change to increase diversity in the workforce," the authors conclude.

More information: Ashlee J. Vance et al, NANN Membership Recommendations, *Advances in Neonatal Care* (2023). [DOI: 10.1097/ANC.0000000000001111](https://doi.org/10.1097/ANC.0000000000001111)

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