

What's next



Healthcare

Honoring the hard and “heart” work of the nursing profession

Nurses are truly the backbone of patient care. They are often the first person we see in a clinical care setting, and they are usually the ones who walk us to the door, providing clarifying details and answering any follow-up questions we might have. They hold our hands when we are scared, listen carefully as we share our concerns, and work side-by-side with physicians to ensure we get the best possible care. Along with the minute-by-minute patient care that nurses provide, they also are tasked with arduous clinical documentation and associated administrative work. It is essential that we not only show our gratitude for nurses, but that we support them and alleviate the burdens of their unique documentation workflow responsibilities through technological advancements.

Diana Nole

Posted May 7, 2021



Often when we talk about the healthcare industry at large, we focus on a number of topics, ranging the gamut from system pressures, burnout, and patient experience, to cost, infrastructure, and interoperability. Certainly, there is an incredible amount of work we must continue to do to improve healthcare, but the reality is that while excellent healthcare is the result of a number of contributing factors, one aspect supersedes all else: strong, caring, and talented teams of professionals who work together to provide the best support to people during times when they truly need it the most. And, in addition to physicians and specialists, those care teams are largely composed of incredible nurses, care assistants, and health aides who work around the clock to care for us, as patients.

Those of us who have navigated health issues are acutely aware of the powerful difference nurses make to a patients' experience. Oftentimes, doctors can only spend a short amount of time with a patient before the next appointment, and nurses are critical to providing the continuity of care, delivering additional information, answering questions, making sure that we, as patients, feel calm and understand the next steps. Not only is it hard work, but it is “heart” work, too. And, for those of us who have close friends and family who have devoted their lives to caring for others, we know this firsthand. My sister has been a nurse for the last 30 years, and I have watched her endless strength, compassion, and empathy for her patients. For those who go into nursing – it's more than a job, it's a reflection of who they are as people.

But over the years, as we have seen a depersonalization trend in healthcare due to mounting industry pressures, that has taken a toll on patients, doctors, and nurses alike.

No patient wants to be just a chart number, and nurses have continued to bridge the widening gaps left by physician burnout, looking to provide that “extra” support that patients need and, as a result, they have been placed under even more pressure. In other words, nurses’ commitment to humanity and public health doesn’t come without some level of personal sacrifice. And, most recently, the effects of the pandemic, combined with everyday administrative burdens, are having an alarming impact on nurses’ wellbeing – so much so that [92% of nurses have considered leaving the profession](#).

HIMSS and Nuance recently [conducted an international research survey](#), which revealed that 73% of nurses believe that the administrative burden of clinical documentation contributes significantly to healthcare professionals’ overload. We know that [nursing documentation is at the heart of good care](#) and better patient outcomes – but only when it’s timely and thorough. Unfortunately, however, nurses spend as much as a quarter of their shift completing documentation and other administrative tasks rather than focusing on patient care and the other, more rewarding aspects of their essential work.

We need to – and can – do better. Nurses are the critical go-between amongst high-pressure physicians and patients. They’re dealing with caregiving, emotions, families, and follow-up questions, and they need more support than they’re getting today. We cannot sit by in good conscience and let these highly skilled, essential caregivers continue to burn out. Alleviating the administrative burden of documentation is one area where we can do better for our nurses. Speech recognition, voice commands, virtual assistant capabilities, and AI-powered solutions, in general, can all make documentation workflows more efficient, which not only alleviates these burdens, but it also supports nurses’ wellbeing and patient safety.

AI-powered solutions can create the flexibility and support that’s so needed by those who care for us. In short, investments in these technologies are investments in our nurses. And though Nurses Week ends on May 12, our commitment to supporting their work endures well beyond that one week.

I encourage everyone to think about how they can support the nursing profession this week and long after – whether it’s a free meal, words of encouragement, or something larger that can help to alleviate the [significant burnout that nurses are experiencing](#). We honor and thank each and every nurse for the extraordinary commitment they’ve made to put their patients front and center.

Patients Front and Center is a blog series by Diana Nole, Executive Vice President & General Manager of Nuance's Healthcare division. Today, patients are the most underutilized resource in healthcare, and they want to be fully engaged in their health and care. Patients want more time, more empathy, more context, and more personalized care. When we apply AI and technology to reduce clinicians' administrative tasks, doctors and nurses can give more to their patients, keeping the patient front and center to improve experiences, outcomes, and lives.

Tags: [clinician burnout](#), [healthcare](#), [Nurses Week](#), [patient experience](#)



About Diana Nole

Diana joined Nuance in June 2020 as the executive vice president and general manager of Nuance's Healthcare division, which is focused on improving the overall physician-patient experience through cutting-edge AI technology applications. She is responsible for all business operations, growth and innovation strategy, product development, and partner and customer relationships. Over the course of her career, Diana has held numerous executive and leadership roles, serving as the CEO of Wolter Kluwers' Healthcare division, president of Carestream's Digital Medical Solutions business, and vice president of strategy, product management, and marketing for Eastman Kodak's Healthcare Information Technology Solutions business. Diana has dual degrees in Computer Science and Math from the State University of New York at Potsdam and earned her MBA from the University of Rochester's Simon School.

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