

Wisconsin Center for Nursing 15th Annual Conference
Strategies for Strengthening Our Wisconsin Nursing Workforce Panel Discussion
Wisconsin Policy Impacting the State Nursing Workforce

Overview of the Public Health Nursing Resolutions Project

- Resolution Requesting Reinstatement of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Director of Public Health Nursing Position
- Resolution Requesting Recruitment and Retention Initiatives to Address the Public Health Nurse Workforce Shortage in Wisconsin
- Resolution Optimizing the Public Health Nurse Role for Improved Population Health Outcomes

I. Introduction

The Public Health Nursing Resolutions Project was made possible through the [Wisconsin Public Health Council's \(WI-PHC's\)](#) direction to prioritize public health concerns, providing leadership and guidance to the Department of Health Services, the Governor, the Legislature, and the public on progress in implementing the state's 10-year public health plan and coordination of responses to public health emergencies. The WI-PHC was established in Wis. Stat. § 15.197(13), as enacted by 2003 Wis. Act 186 to inform and advise the Governor, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), the Wisconsin State Legislature, and the people of Wisconsin. The WI-PHC is comprised of 23 members, representing health care consumers, health care providers, health professions educators, local health departments and boards, federally recognized American Indian Tribes or bands, and public safety agency with Paula Morgen, the current council chair (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Public Health Council, 2025)

II. Background

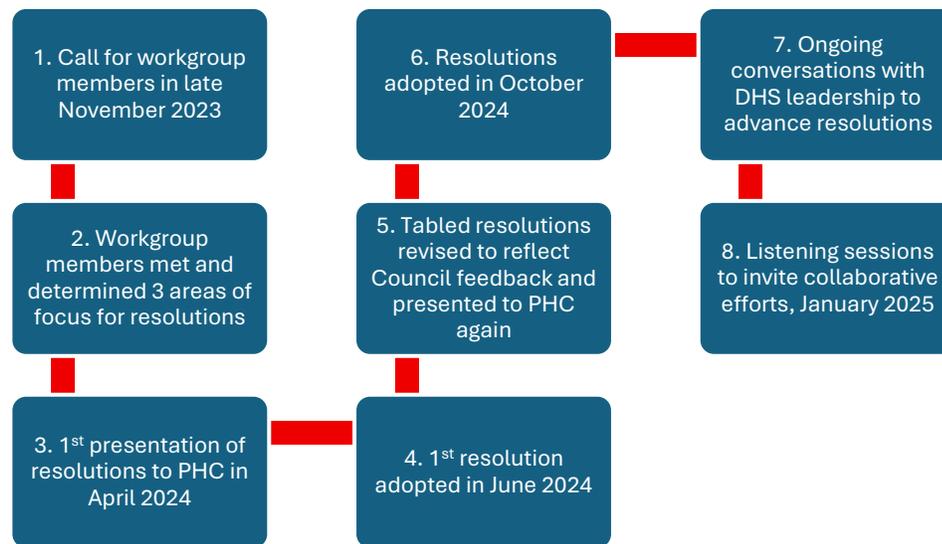
In the Summer of 2023 – [WI-PHC's Issues Committee](#) (one of 4 WI-PHC's committees) called for issues to be submitted for consideration. The WI-PHC's Issues Committee – disseminated the request for issues widely. Pamela Guthman, DNP, RN, APHN-PHN submitted the Public Health Nursing (PHNing) Workforce Shortage and the impact on the health of the public and populations as an issue.

- The WI-PHC's Issues Committee received 44 issues with 38 submissions that met the timeline.
- The issue submissions were reviewed by the WI-PHC's Issues Committee through a scoring framework based upon the State Health Improvement Plan's (SHIP's) Foundational Shifts, Priority Areas, Populations, and the Public Health Council's Mission and Vision.
- The Public Health Nursing Workforce Shortage issue was selected as one of 3 priority issues to work on.

III. Explanation of the Public Health Nursing Workforce Issue

On Sept. 6, 2023, Dr. Guthman was contacted by Robert (Bob Leischow), Chair of the WI-PHC Issues Committee and informed the PHNing workforce issue was selected as one of the top 3 issues that they were interested in. He invited Dr. Guthman to present on the Public Health Nursing Workforce Shortage issue on Oct. 6th at the WI-PHC scheduled meeting to provide further details and information about this issue.

- Each PHNing Workforce Shortage Workgroup member self-selected their topic of interest based upon their interest and expertise to address the specific area within the PHNing workforce shortage issue.



(Image adopted from WI Public Health Council, PHNing Workforce Shortage Workgroup's January 2025's presentation)

- All members of the PHNing Workforce Shortage Workgroup were invited to two to three meetings that were scheduled in the months of March, April and May.
 - The smaller workgroup meetings, which were focused on the specific areas as noted above, were held in between the all member scheduled PHNing Workforce Shortage Workgroup meetings.
 - Each smaller work group was led by a member who volunteered to organize and coordinate their meetings, with the intent that each smaller group would report out at the larger PHNing Workforce Shortage meetings to share their current draft and obtain feedback from the members at large. Pamela Guthman and Kelly Kruse Nelles, led the workgroup focused on reinstating the Director of PHNing position, with contributions from other public health nursing representatives on the workgroup including Dr. Katie Gillespie. Erin Cronn, Julie Nieman, and Haley Siehoff each led the effort focused on optimizing the PHNing role, with Erin Cronn coordinating and presenting the final version to the PH Council. Dr. Christine Vandenhouten, Michael Jaeb, and Dr. Elizabeth Markham contributed to the document focused on recruitment and retention of PHNs, with Christine Vandenhouten providing the final resolution version to the PH Council.
 - Of special note and appreciation, are to the regional public health nursing consultants, other public health nurses, nurses, nursing professors, or other organizational nurse representatives, who were in attendance and contributed to discussions, perspectives and research in support of this project.

V. Outcomes

In June 2024, the [Resolution Requesting Reinstatement of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Director of Public Health Nursing Position](#) was passed at the PH Council's June 7, 2024 meeting. Suggestions and recommendations by PHC members were taken back to the small workgroups and the larger PHNing Workforce Shortage Workgroup for further discussion with a focus on considering suggestions for next draft of the resolutions. Additional meetings were also held with the Public Health Council and the Executive Committee members throughout June, July, August and September as draft resolutions were shared regarding the focus areas on PHNing recruitment and retention and optimizing the PHNing role.

- The [Governor's Task Force](#) focused on the Healthcare Workforce and released a report on recommendations for strategies to address salaries, educational pathways, expansion of the health care workforce and prevention resources to improve the health and wellness of communities. The drafted PHNing Workforce Resolutions were noted to be in alignment with the [Governor's Healthcare Workforce Report](#) and was also referenced in the resolutions.
- On Friday, October 4th, the Wisconsin Public Health Council reviewed and approved the resolutions titled, [Requesting Recruitment and Retention Initiatives to Address the Public Health Nurse Workforce Shortage in Wisconsin](#) and [Optimizing the Public Health Nurse Role for Improved Population Health Outcomes](#).
- On November 6, 2024, Dr. Guthman presented to the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB) about the work on the PHNing resolutions and the future dissemination plan of the resolutions.
- Email dissemination of the resolutions were sent to the entities listed on each of the resolutions after they passed the Public Health Council.
 - These entities included WALHDAB and WPHA, leaders of Wisconsin's federally-recognized American Indian Tribes and Bands, Wisconsin Nurses Association, Wisconsin Center for Nursing, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Hospital Association, Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, Wisconsin Department of Children & Families, Schools of Nursing, Medical Directors/Medical Leadership Team, Association of Public Health Nurses, Association of Community Health Nurse Educators, American Public Health Association, Council of Public Health Nurse Organizations, National Association of City County Health Officials, and Association of Prevention, Teaching, and Research, Wisconsin Association of Organizational Leaders, Administrators of Nursing Education in Wisconsin (ANEW), Wisconsin Center for Nursing, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee, Wisconsin Hospital Association, Wisconsin Emergency Management, Wisconsin Counties Association.
- In addition, copies of the resolutions were shared with the Wisconsin's Governor, leadership of the Wisconsin State Legislature, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Secretary, and the Wisconsin State Health Officer of the Division of Public Health.
- In January 2025, information was sent out to interest holders inviting them to attend one of two virtual discussion sessions scheduled for January 22nd and January 30th and engage in discussions. Representatives from the above listed organizations and interested individuals were invited to provide their ideas and suggestions and how their organizations may engage in supporting further

implementation of the resolutions by addressing, prioritizing, and budgeting to address the public health nursing workforce needs.

- The resolutions support creative solutions to address the public health nurse workforce shortage in Wisconsin and offer ideas to diversify the public health nurse workforce to better represent the population's served, with specific emphasis on areas of the state experiencing critical recruitment issues/needs.
- The resolutions aligned with the Governor's Task Force on the Healthcare Workforce Report's recommendations on strategies to address salaries, educational pathways, expansion of workforce and prevention resources to improve the health and wellness of communities.
- The resolutions also identified the need to support new approaches, strategies, and data sharing to bridge gaps between population health needs and public health prevention strategies, including technology needs for interoperability and data modernization to achieve population health goals.
- Agencies and organizations who have responsibilities of population health improvement, were encouraged to optimize the role of public health nursing across the life span through multi-sector collaboration and partnerships focused on the collective impact of community health improvement.
- The Wisconsin Department of Health Services website has these [resolutions and other WI-PHC's actions](#) listed under Statutory Boards, Committees, and Councils.