



Association for Leadership Science in Nursing

3416 Primm Lane
Birmingham, AL 35216
205-823-6106
<http://alsn.info>
office@alsn.email

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Dr. Susan Hassmiller, PhD, RN, FAAN

Dr. Susan Hassmiller, director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)/AARP's Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, served as the senior scholar in residence for the writing of the Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity report. This is the 3rd in a series of Future of Nursing reports from the National Academy of Medicine and sponsored by the RWJF. Dr. Hassmiller will present an overview of the report and its key recommendations and messages during her keynote talk at our October conference. Below is my interview with Dr. Hassmiller.

1. How did you get involved in the Future of Nursing Project?

My employer, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has historically been a great support for the nursing profession. In 2008 we were funding a number of nursing programs including Transforming Care at the Bedside, Quality and Safety in Nursing Education, Nurse Faculty Scholars and much more. The programs were so successful that the Board of Directors wanted to up the ante for how nurses could play an even bigger part in improving the health for all Americans so they commissioned the (then) Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) to form a committee to determine how nurses could play an even larger role. Thus, was born the first report called, The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health. The report was launched in December of 2010, and I served on loan to the Institute of Medicine to lead the effort on that report. Once the report came out RWJF partnered with AARP to create the Center to Champion Nursing in America and the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, for which I have served as the founding director and have continued with that role. Then 10 years later, the Foundation wanted to determine how nurses, this time, could play a larger role in achieving health equity. Thus, the birth of the second report, called, The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Health Equity. Again, I served as Senior Scholar to help lead this effort at the National Academy of Medicine.

2. What was the biggest challenge for you during this project?

The biggest challenge during this second Future of Nursing report was two-fold. One, we could only make recommendations based on the evidence at hand, and as always, in the nursing profession, we don't always have the evidence we need to create best practices. Or in this case make the needed recommendations. That said, the committee made 54 recommendations in 9 areas around nurses achieving health equity. Second, the report was due to be launched in Dec of 2020 and then midway through the pandemic happened. Although the report was delayed by 6 months it gave the committee the added time it needed to focus on new chapters on nurse well-being and disaster and public health emergency preparedness. That added time and chapters, and context, gave the report a much richer texture.

3. What would you say to nurses who say “I’m only one nurse. How can I make a difference?”

Every nurse has a responsibility for understanding and acting on how we might have greater equity in this country. One person can always make a difference. Through individual actions, leading by example, advocating, writing, speaking, conducting research, teaching the next generation, and caring for patients in a way that exemplifies fair and just care....in other words, equitable care.

4. Will there be a 4th Future of Nursing Report, and if so, would you plan to be involved?

I'd like to think so...but if the sequencing is every 10 years, then we will have to get the next generation of leaders to advocate for and lead this effort. This fits well with what we aspire to do in ALSN in generating evidence and creating best practices for our profession.