



## From the Editor

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# From Front Lines to Voting Lines: Nurses Need to Vote in 2020

In early May, a 1-square meter, largely black-and-white painting appeared in the foyer near the emergency department at Southampton General Hospital in England (see Figure 1). A young boy is kneeling by a trashcan, in which he has discarded his Batman and Spiderman figures in favor of a nurse. The work was created by Banksy, an anonymous England-based street artist, political activist, and film director. Banksy left a note for the hospital workers that read, “Thanks for all you’re doing. I hope this brightens the place up a bit, even if it’s only black and white.”

Banksy’s image provides more evidence that the dedication and difficult service nurses have displayed in the face of the severe challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have not gone unnoticed. The world is witness; it is not surprising that nurses are considered the most trusted professionals on the front line of health care delivery.

Nurses’ voices carry immense weight, and now, more than ever, it is critical those voices are heard loud and clear in local, state, and federal elections. The Tri-Council for Nursing is an alliance between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Nurses Association, the American Organization for Nursing Leadership, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing representing nurses in practice, nurse leaders, and nursing educators (see Figure 2). The alliance recently released a joint statement urging nurses to exercise their right to vote in the 2020 Election:

The Tri-Council for Nursing calls upon all nurses to carefully weigh the positions, proposals, and legislative voting records of candidates who aspire to elected office on November 3, 2020. In these unprecedented times, voting may look different, especially with early voting options and vote-by-mail opportunities becoming increasingly relevant.

As we get closer to Election Day, the Tri-Council strongly recommends that you consider the safest way for you to cast your vote. To ensure you have the best information available and are ready to cast your ballot, follow these three simple steps:

1. **Register.** Double check if you are registered to vote by going to [Vote.gov](http://Vote.gov). Some states allow same-day registration, but it is important to check now to ensure that you are prepared for Election Day.

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Figure 1.  
Game Changer, 2020.



Note: Banksy’s artwork, *Game Changer*, was donated to England’s Southampton General Hospital. The artwork is on display in a foyer near the emergency department. In Fall 2020, it is intended to be auctioned to raise money for the National Health Service.

Source: Courtesy of Pest Control Office, Banksy, *Game Changer*, 2020. Printed with permission.

**Figure 2.**  
**Tri-Council for Nursing Members**

The **American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)** is the national voice for academic nursing representing more than 840 schools of nursing nationwide. AACN establishes quality standards for nursing education, influences the nursing profession to improve health care, and promotes public support of baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, research, and practice. For more information, visit [www.aacnursing.org](http://www.aacnursing.org)

The **American Nurses Association (ANA)** is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 4 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all. For more information, visit [www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org)

As the national professional organization of more than 10,000 nurse leaders, the **American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL)** is the voice of nursing leadership. AONL's membership encompasses nurse leaders working in hospitals, health systems, academia and other care settings across the care continuum. Since 1967, the organization has led the field of nursing leadership through professional development, advocacy, and research that advances nursing leadership practice and patient care. AONL is a subsidiary of

the American Hospital Association. For more information, visit [www.AONL.org](http://www.AONL.org)

Founded March 15, 1978, as an independent not-for-profit organization, the **National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN)** was initially created to lessen the burdens of state governments and bring together nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) to act and counsel together on matters of common interest. It has evolved into one of the leading voices of regulation across the world, with the mission to empower and supports nursing regulators in their mandate to protect the public. NCSBN's membership is composed of NRBs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories — American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands. There are three exam user members. There are also 27 associate members that are either NRBs or empowered regulatory authorities from other countries or territories. For more information, visit [www.ncsbn.org](http://www.ncsbn.org)

Dedicated to excellence in nursing, the **National League for Nursing (NLN)** is the premier organization for nurse faculty and leaders in nursing education. The NLN offers professional development, networking opportunities, testing services, nursing research grants, and public policy initiatives to its 40,000 individual and 1,200 institutional members, comprising nursing education programs across the spectrum of higher education and health care organizations. Learn more at [www.NLN.org](http://www.NLN.org)

2. **Do Your Research.** While 2020 is a Presidential Election Year, there are many open seats at the state and local levels as well. It is important to research not only who will be on the ballot, but any proposals that may also be up for consideration this election season. To learn more about local and state voting plans, gain information on polling places, mail-in options, or absentee ballots, visit:
  - **American Nurses Association:** <https://nursesvote.org/>
  - **American Association of Colleges of Nursing:** <https://www.aacnursing.org/Policy-Advocacy/Get-Involved/Nursing-Voices-Nursing-Votes>
  - **American Organization for Nursing Leadership:** <https://wecarewote.aha.org/>
  - **USA.gov/voting**
3. **Vote.** COVID-19 states are also looking at how to provide socially distant voting in person. Look at your work schedule, check out voting options in your state, find your polling site, and determine the best way for you to vote in this year's election.

We understand our country continues to face many challenges, and nurses continue to answer the call to meet the demands of our nation's health and safety, from rural towns to urban centers. With more than 5 million nurses nationwide, there is power in our voice. So this year, during the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, exercise that power by going from the front lines to voting lines to cast your ballot in the 2020 Election.

Nurses can also play a powerful role in advocating for others to vote. Two obstetrical nurses, Lisa Schavrien and Erin Smith, created a program to help New York City's Lenox Hill Hospital patients vote. A few days before an election, patients are given an application for an absentee ballot. A volunteer then takes their application to the local election board where the patient is registered. The volunteer returns with a ballot for the patient to complete. Once the patient has voted, a volunteer hand-delivers the ballot to the local election board. The program, which Schavrien and Smith began during the 2018 election, has now moved beyond Lenox Hill Hospital to other health care facilities.

So, along with strong voices, nurses also have creativity in abundance. I encourage you to consider what you might do beyond casting your vote to seeing that others also have this important opportunity.