



**American Academy of Nursing**  
*transforming health care policy and practice through nursing knowledge*

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## **American Academy of Nursing Releases Position Statement on Nurse Fatigue**

*Academy Recognizes that Safe Nursing Practice Requires Sleep that is High Quality and of Adequate Duration*

**Washington, D.C. (January 11, 2018)** — The American Academy of Nursing today released its position statement recommending policies and practices that promote adequate, high quality sleep for nurses to contribute to safe nursing practice and patient care.

The U.S. healthcare system requires critical nursing services around the clock, leading to many nurses working overnight hours and having irregular shifts. The human bodies' circadian rhythm naturally promotes activity during the day and sleep at night. Long and irregular shift hours, such as a 12-hour work day, disrupts this natural sleep cycle, and has the chance to affect nurses health, readiness, their ability to function in the delivery of patient care, and may lead to more medical errors.

The Academy's position statement, "Reducing Fatigue Associated with Sleep Deficiency and Work Hours in Nurses," was published in the November/December 2017 issue of the Academy's journal, *Nursing Outlook*. "The Academy is pleased to publish this important statement on reducing fatigue in nurses," said Academy President, Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FACHE, FAAN. "Many healthcare organizations may not fully understand the health risks for both nurses and their patients from a tired workforce." To address this issue, the US government's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has developed the online continuing education program, "NIOSH Training for Nurses on Shift Work and Long Work Hours."

On a broader level, 2017 research published by The Ohio State University College of Nursing in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* found that depression is common among nurses and is linked to a higher likelihood that they will make medical errors. The study, led by Bernadette Melnyk, dean of the College of Nursing and member of the million hearts subcommittee of the American Academy of Nursing's Health Behavior Expert Panel, found that more than half of nurses who took part in a national survey reported sub-optimal physical and mental health. [Access the study here.](#)

The Academy recommends that healthcare organizations incorporate evidence-based practices in the design of their healthcare workforce schedules, and also educate themselves about the health risks from long work shift hours.

[Read the Academy's full position statement here.](#)

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**The American Academy of Nursing** ([www.AANnet.org](http://www.AANnet.org)) serves the public and the nursing profession by advancing health policy and practice through the generation, synthesis, and dissemination of nursing knowledge. The Academy's more than 2,500 fellows are nursing's most accomplished leaders in education, management, practice, and research. They have been recognized for their extraordinary contributions to nursing and healthcare.

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