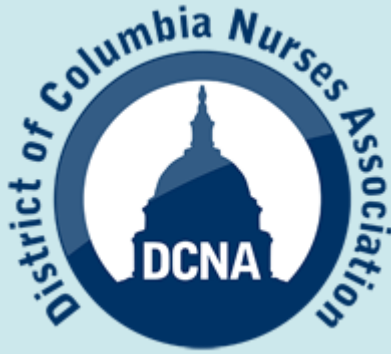


DCNA Together – Making a Difference in DC

November 2025



The Importance of Recognizing Nursing as a Professional Degree

As the President of DCNA, I must address the concerning decision by the Trump Department of Education (DOE) to define professional degree programs in a manner that excludes nursing and significantly limits access to student loans. This exclusion not only restricts vital federal funding for graduate nursing education but also poses a serious threat to the District of Columbia nursing workforce and the quality of patient care nationwide.

Our profession is integral to the healthcare system, demanding extensive education and clinical judgment comparable to fields such as medicine, law, and pharmacy. By failing to recognize nursing as a professional degree, we jeopardize

decades of progress toward equity among health professions (ANA, 2025). This neglect of nursing's complexity and significance is especially troubling particularly given the financial hardships *many* nursing students face. Limiting federal loan opportunities for graduate nursing education risks discouraging potential nurse practitioners and nurse anesthetists from pursuing essential advanced degrees, thereby worsening the existing national nursing shortage (ANA, 2025).

Moreover, the ramifications of this exclusion disproportionately affect economically disadvantaged and minority nurses limiting their access to necessary funding and threatens the diversity of our advanced nursing workforce. This loss of diversity directly undermines our ability to provide culturally competent care to underserved communities (Togloka & Young, 2024).

Ultimately, we must unite to advocate for a strong, well-educated nursing workforce that ensures safe and high-quality patient care. The future of healthcare depends on our ability to attract and retain skilled nursing professionals, and we cannot allow financial barriers to impede access to educational opportunities.

To take action, I urge our members to:

- Contact elected officials: Reach out to *your* congressional representativeS, imploring them to support the maintenance of nursing's professional degree status and ensure access to funding.
- Submit public comments. Stay alert for the Department of Education's upcoming Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) and submit thoughtful public comments during the designated period.
- Support professional organizations: Engage with and support organizations like the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), which are actively working to influence policy and secure funding for advanced nursing education.
- Spread the word. Use social media and your personal networks to raise awareness about this issue and its potential consequences.

Let us stand together in our commitment to ensuring that nursing continues to be recognized as a professional degree, thereby safeguarding both our profession and the patients we serve.

Contract Negotiations

George Washington University Hospital

DCNA presented a full compensation package proposal to UHS during the latest bargaining sessions on November 18th and 19th. UHS/GWUH provided DCNA with **ZERO** proposals.

DCNA proposals

Shift differential proposal:

- 10% - weekend days
- 15% - weekday evenings
- 20% - weekday nights and weekend evenings
- 25% - weekend nights.

On call will be paid 125% of base if called in

\$5 per hour premium pay for Precepting, Shift Lead, ED Bedside Trauma, ED Triage Nurse, Rapid Response substitute (ICU RN when a Rapid RN is not working)

Decrease % of employee contribution for 2026 health insurance
Proposed negotiating new service providers for 2027 health insurance (ones that are available in the DMV, not Tennessee)
Immediate 6% match for 401(k) contributions; you don't have to wait 4 years to get 100% match
\$5,250 maximum for education money - which is NOT taxable
Uniform Allowance of \$500 annually (i.e, scrubs and shoes)

Howard University Hospital

The parties are currently close to reaching an agreement on the entire contract. DCNA is waiting for a response from HUH on whether it will accept DCNA's most recent offer. We hope to have a tentative agreement in the very near future to bring to our members for a ratification vote.

DCNA Adopts a Family for the Holidays

There is still time to donate to the family selected by the Metro Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Donations are tax deductible. Contact Ms. Vickie Spence at vspence@dcna.org if you have questions.

Please visit DCNA on our website at www.dcna.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DCNursesAssociation.

For Assignment Despite Objection and Grievance forms, visit www.dcna.org.

DCNA is located at
1220 12th Street, SE, Suite G10, Washington, DC 20003.
Telephone – (202) 244-2705



DCNA Moves to Represent DC Schools Nurses as Part of DOH Bargaining Unit

DCNA has met with District officials on several occasions to discuss representation of the DC School nurses. On November 6th, Deborah Thomas, DCNA Nurse Consultant and Edward Smith, DCNA Executive Director, met with Ms. Katrina Mitchell, DOH, HR. Ms. Mitchell advised that the RNs are supervisory and thus are excluded by DC law from union representation. We made clear that DCNA disagrees with this legal conclusion. DCNA will file a petition with the DC Public Employee Relations Board to add DC School RNs to Compensation Unit 13, the bargaining unit encompassing all nurses working in the DC Government (with the exception of nurses employed at the Department of Behavioral Health).

Upcoming Events

TENTATIVE - DCNA Labor Relations Training, Wednesday, December 10th, 1:00 – 5:00 pm, 1220 12th Street, SE, Suite G10, Washington, DC 20003. Seats are limited; register via email to esmith@dcna.org, no later than December 1st.