

Nurses in Politics: An Emergent Need

Tariq Ali¹, Kashif Khan²

Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery, Karachi, Pakistan^{1,2}

Doi: 10.53685/jshmdc.v4i2.207

Nurses play a vital role in the healthcare industry, working tirelessly to ensure the well-being of patients. However, their contributions are not limited to the confines of hospitals and clinics only. Nurses have the potential to bring their expertise in the field of politics, and the benefits of their involvement in this arena could be substantial.

Nurses are natural advocates. They have spent their careers fighting for the health and well-being of patients, and they are skilled at navigating complex healthcare systems to ensure that their patients receive the care they need. These advocacy skills could translate well to the political arena, where nurses could use their voices to advocate for policies that improve access to care, reduce healthcare disparities, and promote health equity.

Furthermore, nurses are well-respected by the public. They are ranked as one of the most trusted professions,¹ and their expertise and dedication to patient care are widely recognized. This trust and respect could be leveraged to build support for healthcare policies that prioritize the needs of patients and communities. Despite the potential benefits of nurses in politics, their representation in this arena has been limited. According to a report by the National Nurses United Union, only 10 nurses currently serve in Congress, out of a total of 535 members.^{2,3} This underrepresentation is especially striking considering that nurses make up the largest group of healthcare professionals, with over 4 million registered nurses in the

United States only.⁴ On the other hand, according to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2020-2021, there were 116,659 registered nurses in the Pakistan.⁵ Currently, there is no representation of nursing professionals in the Pakistan's parliament.

To address this issue, efforts must be made to encourage and support nurses who are interested in pursuing political careers. It is possible by initiating mentorship programs, training in advocacy and policy making, and providing financial support for campaigns. There is a need to change the culture within the nursing profession to recognize and value the importance of political engagement.

Nurses who will enter politics would face challenges and obstacles. Political campaigns can be expensive and time-consuming, and the political arena can be fraught with partisanship and gridlock for them. However, these challenges are not insurmountable, and the potential benefits of nurses in politics are too great to ignore.

In conclusion, nurses have the potential to be powerful agents of change in the political arena. Their expertise, advocacy skills, and public trust make them uniquely qualified to shape healthcare policy and advocate for the needs of patients and communities. To fully realize the potential of nurses in politics, efforts must be made to encourage and support their participation in this arena. With the right support and resources, nurses could help to create a healthcare system that truly meets the needs of all patients.

REFERENCES

1. Darbyshire P, Thompson DR. Can nursing educators learn to trust the world's most trusted profession? *Nurs Inq.* 2021; 28(2): e12412. doi: 10.1111/nin.12412.
2. Walton AL, McLennan D, Mullinix CF. Encouragement: The key to increasing the number of nurses serving on boards. *Nurs Forum.* 2020; 55(3): 331-340. doi:10.1111/nuf.12432.
3. Chaffee MW. Is there a nurse in the house? *The Nurses in the United States Congress* 2017. Available from: <https://nursekey.com/is-there-a-nurse-in-the-house-the-nurses-in-the-united-states-congress/>.
4. Top Nursing Tools for Success 2023. Available from: <https://online.arbor.edu/news/nursing-tools#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Journal%20of,Coordinating%20treatment%20across%20healthcare%20teams>.
5. Survey PE. Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-2022 2022. Available from: https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter_22/Economic%20Survey%202021-22.pdf.

How to cite this article: Ali T, Khan K. Nurses in Politics: An Emergent Need. *J Shalamar Med Dent Coll.* 2023; 4(2): 88-89. doi: 10.53685/jshmdc.v4i2.207



This is an Open access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International license.

Corresponding Author:

Kashif Khan

Aga Khan University,

School of Nursing and Midwifery, Karachi

Email address: kashifadmissions97@gmail.com