

Fall 10-22-2021

## **Nursing Pathway Project: Finding Solutions to the Underrepresentation of Men in Nursing**

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# **Nursing Pathway Project**

## **A Narrative Review of the Underrepresentation of Men in Nursing**

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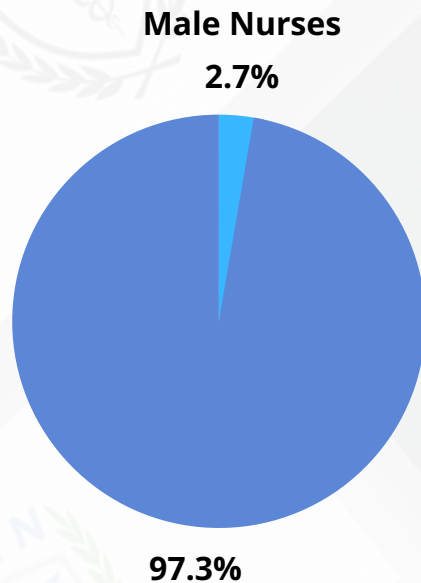
# Disclosure

**We have no actual or potential conflict of interest  
in relation to this program/presentation.**

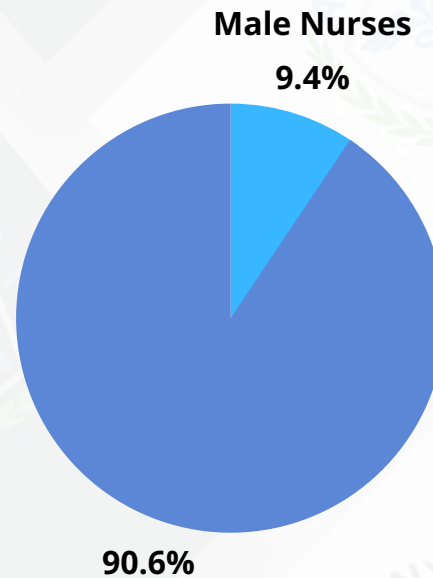


# Introduction

**Men are underrepresented in the nursing profession.**



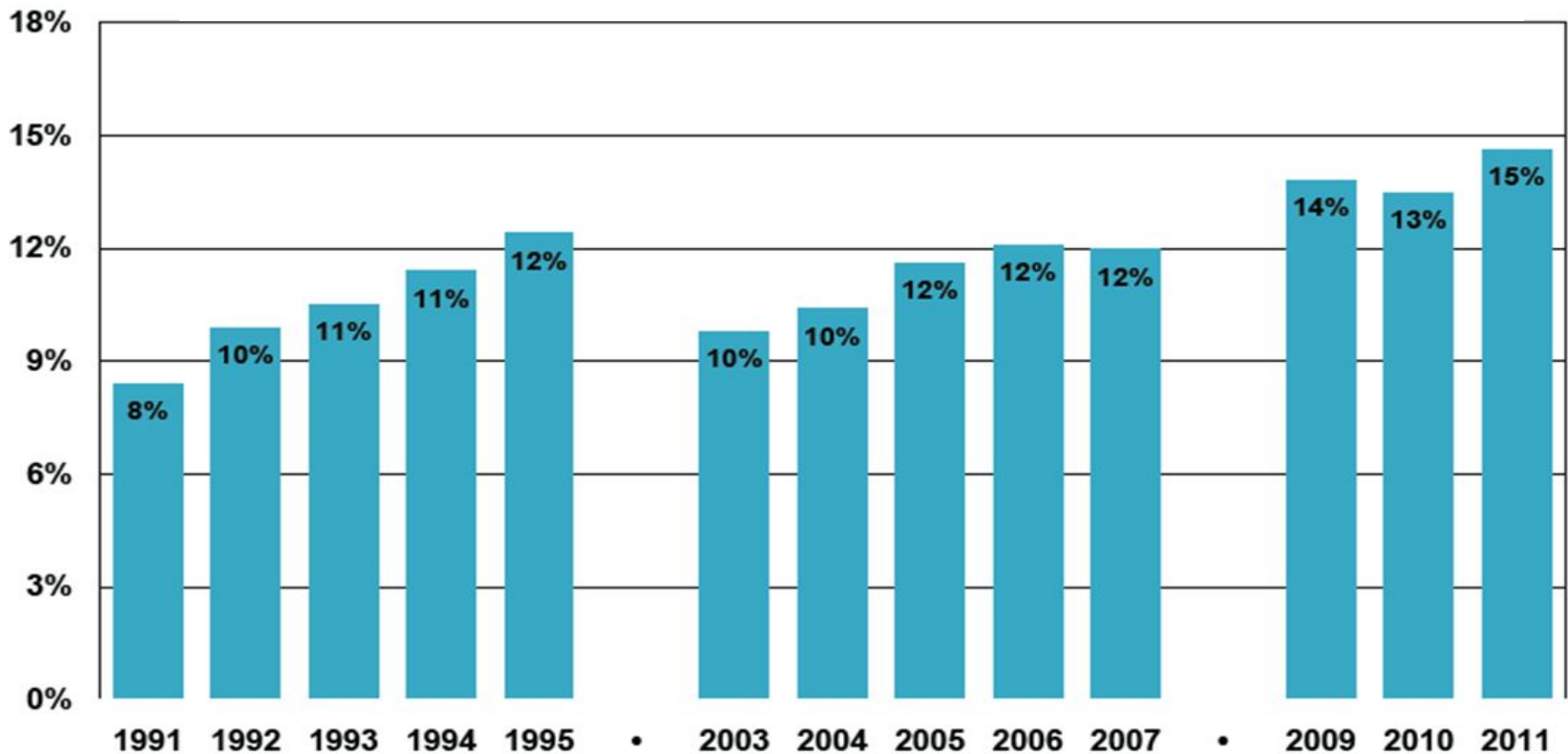
**1970 US Census Bureau**



**2020 National Nursing  
Workforce Survey**

# Stagnation of Men in Nursing Enrollment

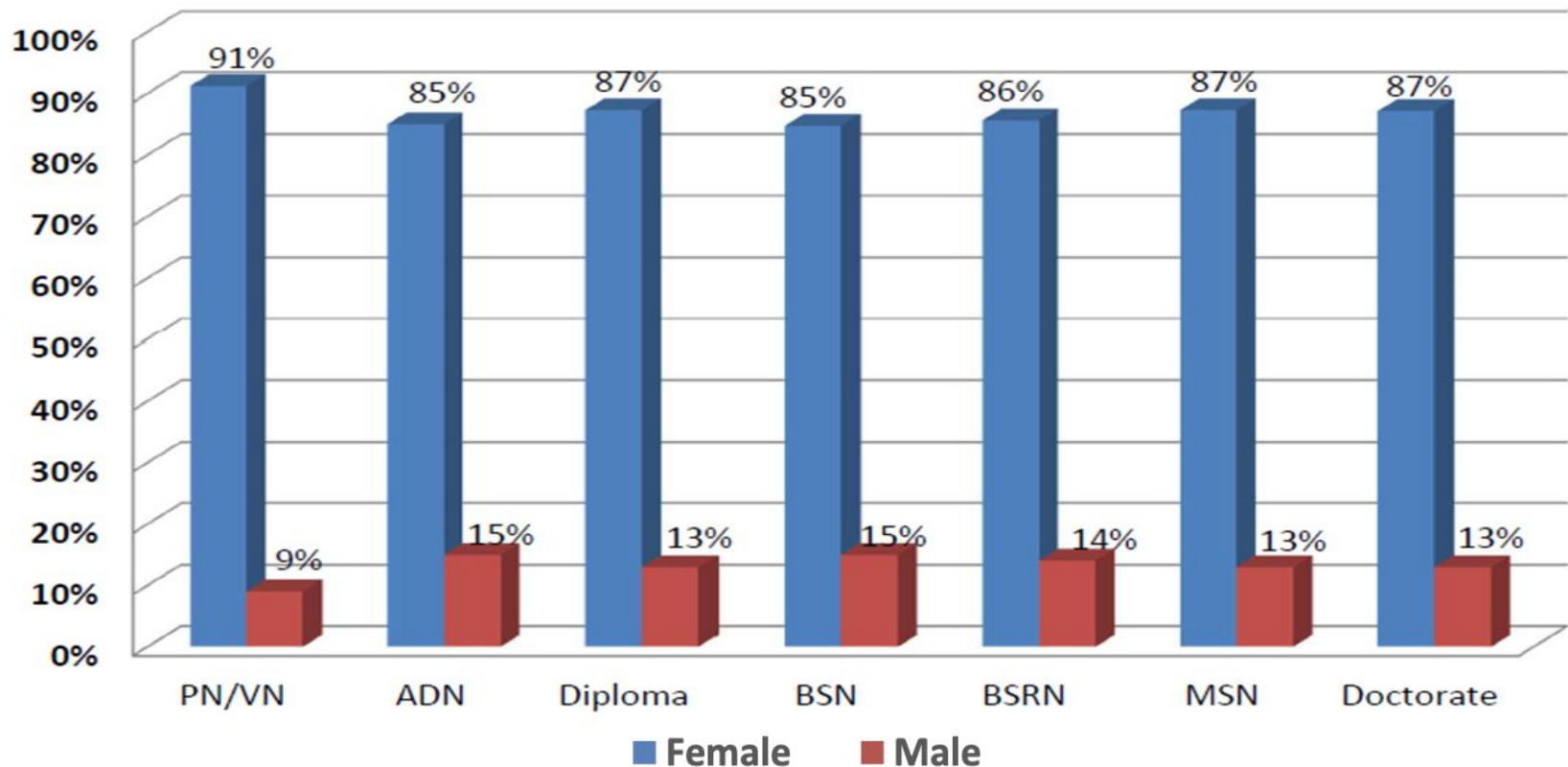
Percentage of Men Enrolled in Basic RN Programs by Program Type  
1991-2011 (Selected years)



(NLN, 2012)

# Stagnation of Men in Nursing Enrollment

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Nursing Program by Sex and Program Type  
2016

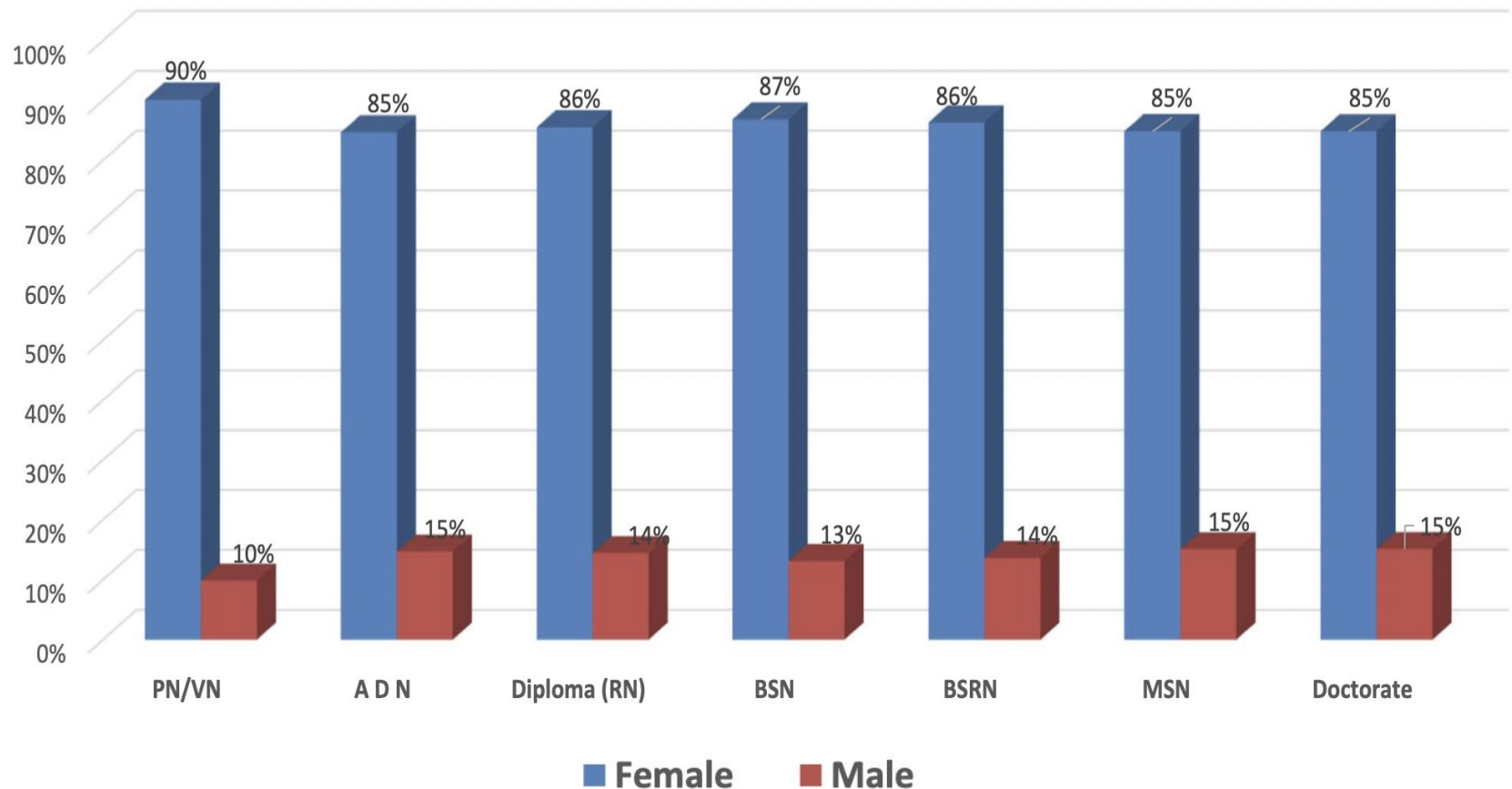


(NLN, 2017)



# Stagnation of Men in Nursing Enrollment

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Nursing Program by Sex and Program Type  
2020

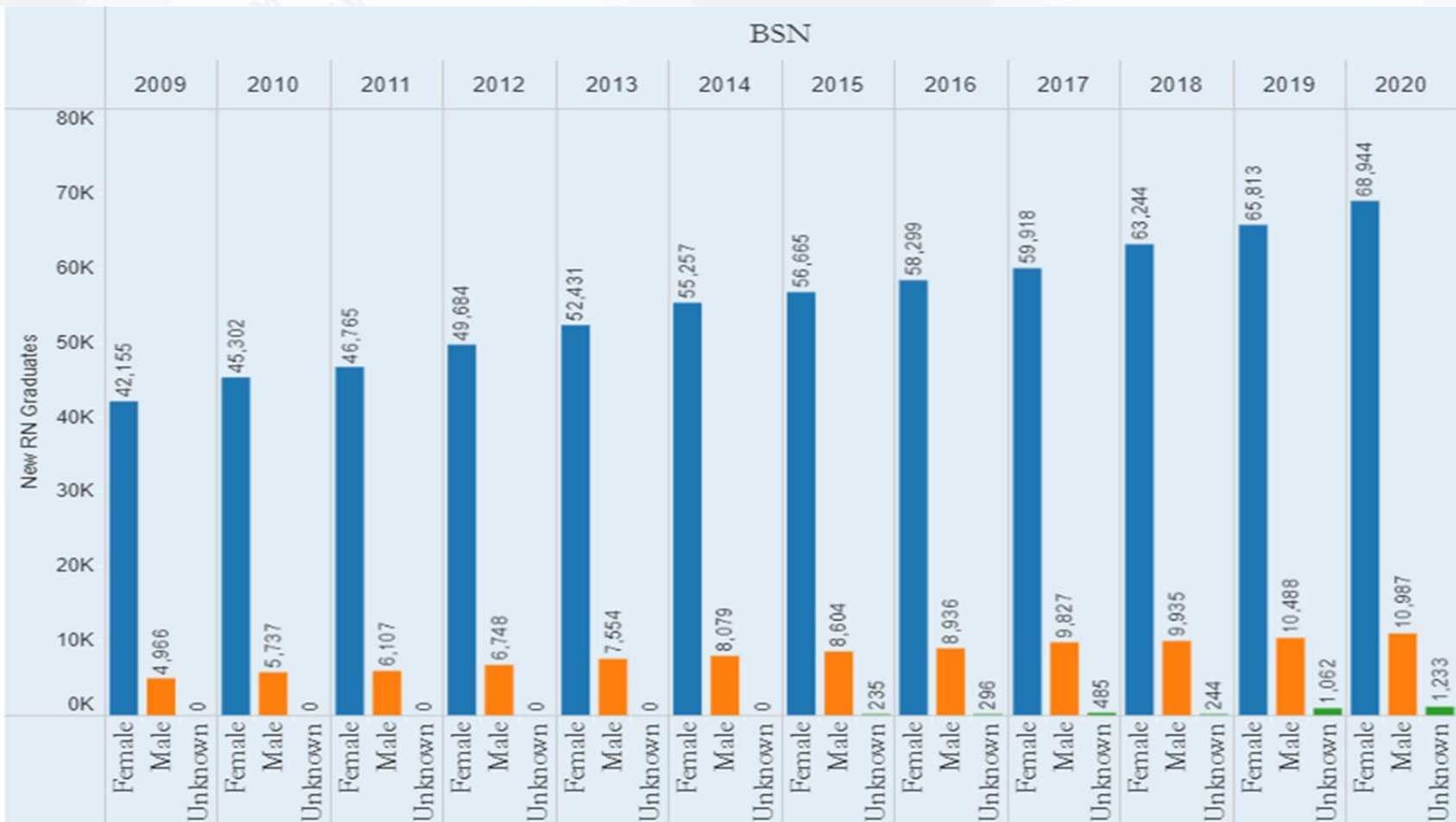


(NLN, 2021)



# Stagnation of Men in Nursing Enrollment

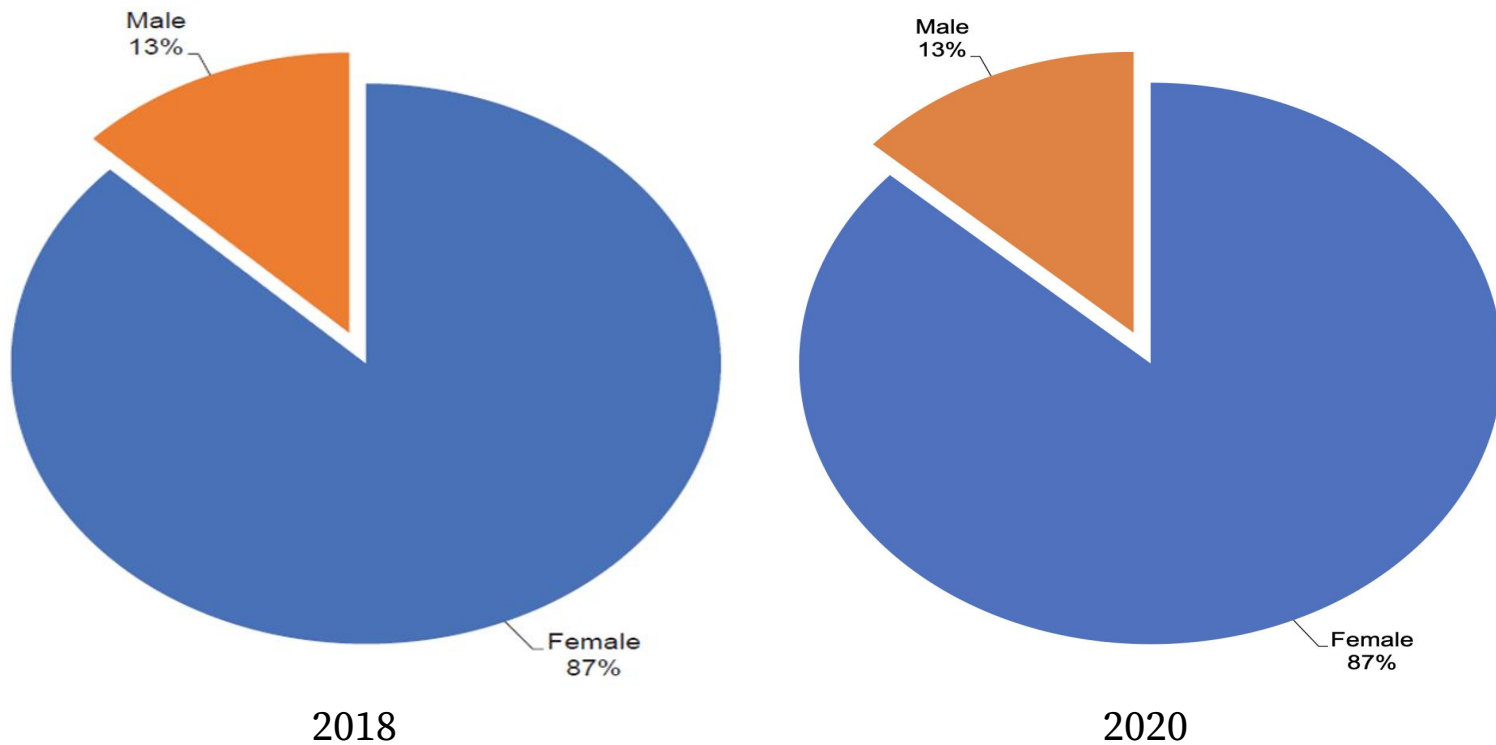
Accredited RN nursing program graduates nationwide by sex and degree type



(Campaign for Action, 2021)

# Stagnation of Men in Nursing Enrollment

Percentage of Enrolled Students in Prelicensure RN Programs by Sex



(NLN, 2019; NLN, 2021)

# Diversity

- **The quality of health care delivery is impacted by the diversity of its caregivers** (NLN, 2016)
- **Greater emphasis must be placed on increasing the diversity of the workforce, including gender** (IOM, 2011)
- **Significant nursing shortages in the U.S. since the 1950s remain, impacted by the aging baby-boomer generation and ongoing global COVID pandemic** (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2020; Buerhaus et al., 2016; International Council of Nurses, 2021)
- **Inclusion of more men could ameliorate the problem** (Gavine et al., 2020; Kronsberg et al., 2018).

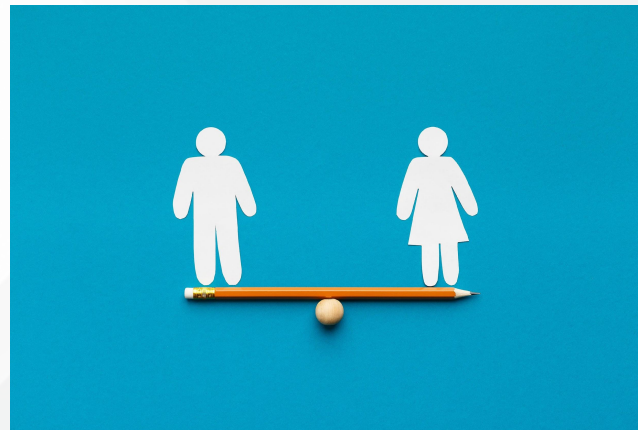


# Gender Parity

**Despite recognition that men are disproportionately underrepresented in nursing,**

**there DOES NOT seem to be a sense of urgency**

**to bring the profession to gender parity as with male-dominated professions such as medicine and law (ABA, 2020; AAMC, 2019b)**





# Objective

- **To understand the development of interest in nursing as a profession among self-identified males and the factors that contribute toward their perceptions of nursing as a professional career choice.**
- **The factors that influence men to consider nursing as a profession and the perceptions of male middle and high school students and career guidance counselors of nursing as a career for men.**
- **A better understanding of these perceptions will lead to actionable strategies that address the persistent underrepresentation of men in nursing.**

# Methodology

- **Narrative review of the literature**
- **Databases accessed: Embase, CINAHL, Google Scholar, Cochrane, and ProQuest One.**
- **Criteria for inclusion: peer-reviewed articles and grey literature, especially when literature was limited on the subject, published in English.**
- **Included: quantitative and qualitative studies, systematic reviews, and literature reviews.**
- **Titles were screened for relevance, continuing to the abstract and then to the entire article accordingly. When an exact article was found regarding a topic, the “relevant” or “similar” database features - the snowball technique, were used to further search.**

• **Findings from the studies were analyzed and presented**



# Demographics entering nursing

	Entered nursing directly out of H.S	Entered nursing after doing other things
Men	20%	80%

(Hodes Research, 2005)

	Entered nursing directly out of H.S	Entered nursing after enrolling in other majors	Entered nursing as a second career
Men	20%	24%	56%

(Moore & Dienemann, 2014)

	Considered nursing BEFORE age 21	Considered nursing AFTER age 21
Men	51.9%	48.1%
Women	82.6%	17.4%

(Stanley et al., 2014)

# Results

## Factors Influencing Men to Enter Nursing

- **History of nursing: Men, members of religious and military orders, provided the first forms of nursing care, taking care of the sick, the wounded, and the dying** (Evans, 2004; Ross, 2017).
- **Middle of the 19th century: Florence Nightingale firmly established nursing as a woman's occupation** (Evans, 2004; Ross, 2017).
- **It was thought that caring came more naturally for women according to the Victorian ideologies of the time** (Evans, 2004; Ross, 2017).
- **Feminization and the perception of nursing as a woman's occupation remain - widely acknowledged as the primary contributor to men being reluctant to choose nursing as a career** (Cottingham, 2014; Evans, 2004; Kronsberg et al., 2018; O'Connor, 2015; Ross, 2017; Whitford et al., 2018).

# Barriers to Men in Nursing

## Gender Stereotype and Sexual Orientation

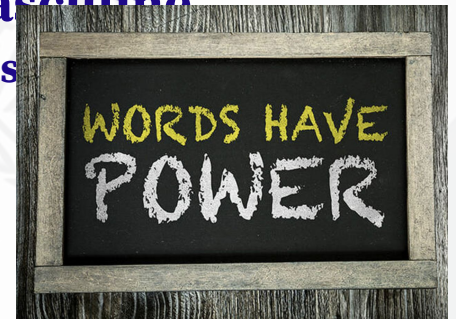
- **Nurse = “she”** (Carrigan & Brooks, 2016; Gavine et al., 2020; MacWilliams et al., 2013; O’Connor, 2015; O’Lynn et al., 2020; Rambur et al., 2011; Stanley, et al., 2016)
- **Men in nursing = “gay”** (Gavine et al., 2020; Hodes Research, 2005; O’Connor, 2015; O’Lynn et al., 2020; Petges & Sabio, 2020; Powers et al., 2018; Stanley, 2014)
- **Threat to male gender identity that discourages potential male entrants** (Gavine et al., 2020; Hodes Research, 2020; Petges & Sabio, 2020; Stanley et al., 2014).



# Barriers to Men in Nursing

**Effects of gendered perception of nursing** (Forsman & Barth, 2017):

- **Lack of interest: outright dismissal and stops men from seeking further info**
  - **Feminine-titled occupations** (e.g., “Emergency room nurse”) □ significantly lower interest ratings among men
  - **Masculine descriptions added** (e.g., “Emergency room nurses use analytical skills in determining the source of a patient’s critical condition. Sometimes they must be very daring when treating patients who are severely wounded” p. 465, Table 1) □ interest ratings higher, but lower than below
  - **Non-titled occupations with the same exact masculine descriptors** (e.g., “People in this job use analytical skills”) □ greatest interest





# Barriers to Men in Nursing

**Lower Status Occupation** (Evans, 2004; Girvin et al. 2016; König, in press; Rambur et al., 2011; Stanley et al., 2014; Ten Hoeve et al., 2014)

- **Portrayal in media less than favorable** (e.g., sexual objects, “gay,” effeminate) (Girvin et al., 2016; Ten Hoeve et al., 2014)
- **Trusted, not respected; undervalued** (Girvin et al., 2016; Stanley et al., 2014; Ten Hoeve et al., 2014)
- **Lack of understanding or nurses’ roles** (Girvin et al., 2016; Stanley et al., 2016; Ten Hoeve et al., 2014): subordinate, lacking responsibility
- **Low-status perception – “from lingering belief that nursing is an extension of women’s domestic roles, thus, unskilled and of low value”** (Evans, 2004)
- **Lack of Role Models** (Hodes Research, 2005; O’Connor, 2015; Petges & Sabio, 2020; Stanley et al., 2014; Whitford et al., 2018)

# Facilitators to Men in Nursing

## Close Encounters and Exposure to Nursing

- **Family members in nursing, family support, being cared for by nurses** (Gavine et al., 2020; Gore et al., 2017; Hodes Research, 2005; Juliff et al., 2017; O'Connor, 2015; O'Lynn et al., 2020; Stanley et al., 2014; Yi & Keogh, 2016)
- **Parents as nurses – more than twice as likely to express interest in nursing** (Gore, et al., 2017)
- **Men much more likely than women to have had healthcare job before nursing**





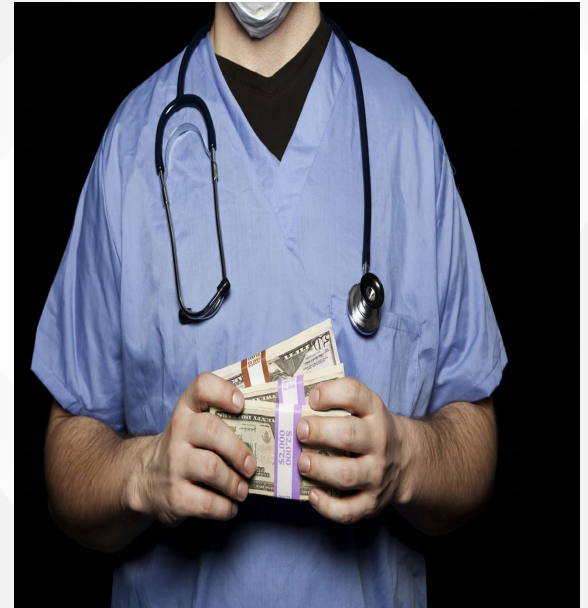
# Facilitators to Men in Nursing

## Job Security and Financial Stability

- **Median annual earnings \$70,000** (Masson, 2021)
- **Unemployment 1.3%, rest of U.S. 5.4%** (BLS, 2021)

## Career Mobility – specializations, advanced practice

**Caring – primary motivation of men entering nursing** (Hodes Research, 2005; Gavine et al., 2020; Juliff et al., 2017; LaRocco, 2007; O'Connor, 2015; O'Lynn et al., 2020; Petges & Sabio, 2020; Stanley et al., 2014; Yi & Keogh, 2016)



# **Perception of Nursing as a Female Occupation**

**Profession is overlooked by males through several mechanisms**

- 1. Affects guidance counselor's encouragement for males to enter the profession**
  - **Often leads to negative advisement and discouragement**
  - **Creates an attitude of "Why not just become a physician"**
- 2. Affects men's awareness about the profession because it is seen as by men and society as:**
  - **Feminized (Men are not caring or cannot care attitudes)**
  - **Feminized-related (Caring activities should be done by women)**
  - **Low status profession (The hierarchy of healthcare suggests that the physician is the overseer and typically male)**

# **Facilitators to Encouraging Men in Nursing**

- **How do we breakdown the perceptions and attitudes?**
  - **Exposure to nursing**
    - **Introduce men who are nurses to men looking for a new or change in profession**
    - **Encourage mentorship of males in high school, college, and other health occupations by men in nursing**
  - **Emphasize the job security associated with the profession**
    - **Discuss the financial stability and career mobility associated with the profession**
  - **Become involved in advocacy for the profession**
    - **Encourage accurate media portrayal of nursing by removing gender connotations**



# Guidance Counselor Perceptions & Practices

## School Guidance Counselors

- **Facilitate & influence career path decisions** (Bolan & Grainger, 2005; Pannoni & Moody, 2020)
- **May be influenced by perceptions and biases** (Kelleher & O'Connor, 2012)



# Guidance Counselor Perceptions & Practices

## Discouragement & Barriers

- **Male adolescents reported nursing not presented as career option by H.S. guidance counselor** (Boughn, 1994; LaRocco, 2007)
- **Nursing not emphasized enough or offered as career option** (Hodes Research, 2005)
- **Some reported little or no guidance from guidance counselors to males interested in nursing** (Kelly et al., 1996)
- **Mixed findings regarding guidance counselor knowledge of nursing** (Bolan & Grainger, 2006; King et al., 2007)

# Guidance Counselor Perceptions & Practices

## Counselor Perception of Nursing

- **Many perceived nursing as “caring” profession, rather than academic** (Williams & Dickstein-Fischer, 2018)
- **Most knowledgeable, 121 of sample never recommended nursing to students** (Kelleher & O'Connor, 2012)
- **Nursing perceived by many counselors as “narrow career field more suited for females”** (Campbell-Heider et al., 2008)
- **Counselors should “see” 100% of students** (Hodes Research, 2005)





# Guidance Counselor Perceptions & Practices

## Negative Advisement & Discouragement

- **28% of sample (both male and female students) were discouraged from entering nursing** (Grainger & Bolan, 2006)
- **60% (n = 498) of men reported dissuasion from nursing** (Hodes Research, 2005)
- **Some reported purposeful discouragement of male students from entering nursing** (Grainger & Bolan, 2006; Kronsberg, 2017; Meadus & Twomey, 2011)
- **Many persisted, in spite of discouragement and lack of information**

# Analysis & Discussion

- **Two overarching themes contribute to the underrepresentation of men in nursing**

## **1. Society's perception of nursing as a female occupation**

- **Stereotyping**
- **Gender Bias**

## **2. Lack of awareness about the attributes of nursing as a potential profession for men**

- **Feminization of the profession drives prospective men away** (Ross, 2017)



# Analysis & Discussion

**The feminization remains pervasive in society and includes guidance counselors who possess the bias resulting in:**

- 1. Lack of encouragement and guidance toward male high school students,**
- 2. A low or narrow perception of nursing,**
- 3. Providing negative advisement toward pursuing a career in nursing**



# **Analysis & Discussion**

**Conversely, awareness plays a significant role in facilitating men's entry into nursing. Facilitators include:**

- **Exposure to nursing**
- **Knowledge of the job security,**
- **Financial stability, and**
- **Career mobility in the profession**

**Results from delayed exposure include:**

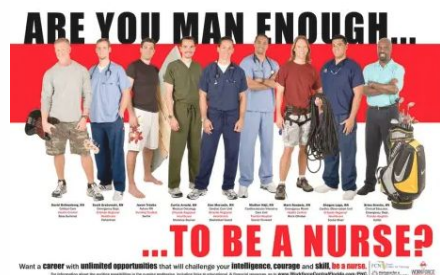
- **Men being older before entering nursing**
- **Men are more likely to have held other healthcare-related occupations before coming to nursing**



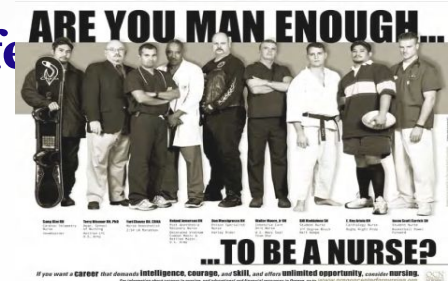
# Recommendations

Media portrayal of nurses should be encouraged.

- Should not focus on sexual or gendered connotations
- Be more informative of nurses' roles as professionals,
- DO NOT confront gendered perceptions by only emphasizing masculinity in portrayals of the male nurse
  1. May be counterproductive and ineffective because it appears to call more attention to, and thus reinforce, the stereotype (Clow et al., 2015; Hodes Research, 2005)
  2. Greater interest may be achieved by eliminating the



...r connotations of professional (Clow et al., 2017).



# Recommendations

**To increase awareness, who should lead the charge?**

- **Nurses of all genders**
- **Schools of nursing**
- **Educators and Nurse Leaders**
- **Men in nursing**



**Who should be targeted?**

- **Middle school students**
- **High school students**
- **Guidance counselors**
- **Men looking for another career option**

**GOAL: To recruit, serve as role models and mentors, and to**



# Recommendations

**Increased visibility is needed to elevate the profession's status.**

- **Nurse as an active advocate for the profession**
- **Nurse as a more positive role model of the profession**
- **Male nurse media presence should be increased**
- **Portrayals should focus on what nursing is and what nurses do, e.g., the science, the technology, roles & responsibilities, **not masculinity.****



# Going Forward

**Further research is necessary to determine:**

- **the predictors of male secondary students' choice of nursing as a career**
- **whether increased awareness of the nursing profession among the students and guidance counselors increases the likelihood of entry into nursing.**
- **various forms of awareness initiatives should be explored, implemented, and evaluated to determine effectiveness.**

# What can WE do?



**The premier  
organization for men in  
nursing in the United  
States of America**

**The American Association for Men in Nursing (AAMN), should continue working to increase awareness by:**

- **Leveraging its membership and connections with schools of nursing.**
- **Leveraging other professional organizations**
- **Addressing media portrayals of male nurses via a media manager**
- **Promoting male nurse activity in committees of influence (e.g. school boards, etc.)**

# AAMN Research Task Force

## Purpose:

To develop a research arm (standing committee) of the American Association for Men in Nursing (AAMN)

## Objectives:

1. Promote and facilitate research activities among members of the organization
2. Coordinate the research activities of AAMN members toward increasing the representation of Men in Nursing (the *Men in Nursing Initiative: Nursing Pathway Project*)
3. Develop research questions and conduct research related to men's perceptions of nursing as a professional career choice (*Nursing Pathway Project*)
4. Develop research questions and conduct research about the experiences of men in the nursing profession (*Nursing Pathway Project*)
5. Develop research questions and conduct research about how nursing is promoted to boys and young men (*Nursing Pathway Project*)
6. Disseminate research findings broadly (publications and presentations)
7. Secure grant funding to support research initiatives
8. Develop guidelines and best practice policies to increase the representation/recruitment of men in the nursing profession (i.e., White paper)
9. Facilitate interventions at the national and international levels

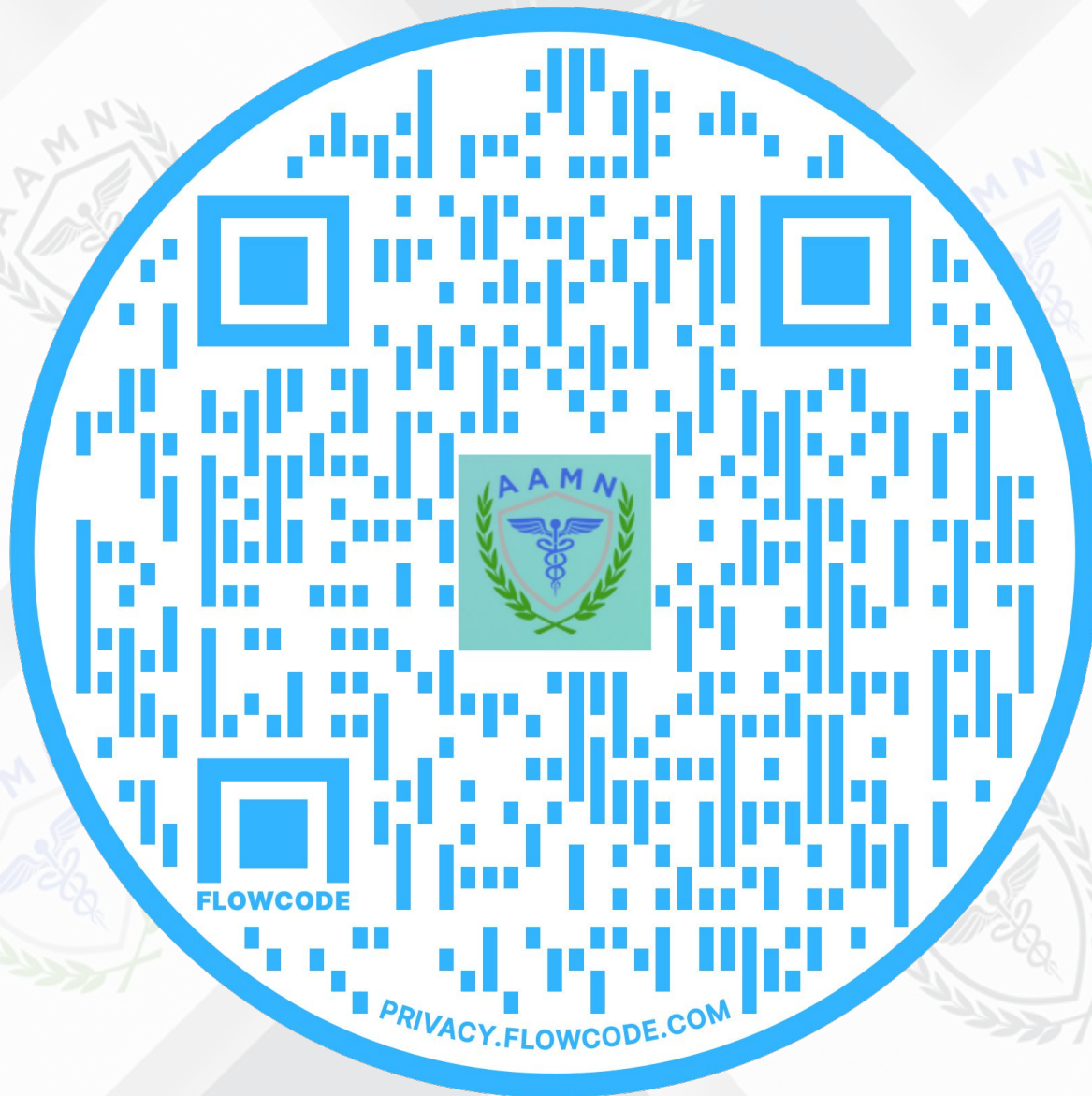




**ANY QUESTIONS?**



# References







**SCAN HERE!**

**Are you interested in participating  
in the nursing pathway project?**