

Nursing Research Grants in 2020

On April 1, 2020, the American Nurses Foundation announced that the Nursing Research Grants program was being suspended, due to uncertainties caused by the coronavirus global health crisis. At that time, the Foundation anticipated having new plans in place by August 1st. As the COVID-19 pandemic worsened and persisted, however, it became increasingly clear that it would not be possible to proceed in any normal fashion in 2020.

Our existing researchers were, almost without exception, unable to carry out work planned or already in progress. Most academic institutions were closed or severely curtailed. Clinical settings were under duress, coping with the extraordinary demands of the crisis. Foundation staff were redeployed, focused on creating and managing the Coronavirus Response Fund for Nurses and a new suite of programs to support nursing in the pandemic. Our own endowments were experiencing valuation changes with market fluctuations, and our funding partners were confronted by similar situations, as well as operational budget shortfalls in a contracting economy.

At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted inequities in the health care system. Social determinants of health, implicit and explicit biases, and systemic racism, though long-standing issues, played a role in these inequities. The ANA Enterprise, and the Foundation board, turned attention to these issues, the impact on the profession of nursing, and the implications for our work as an institution, industry leader, and employer.

For all these reasons, we determined that it was neither prudent nor feasible to carry out a process for grant awards in 2020. In keeping with both the terms of the fund endowments that we steward with great care, and the spirit of innovation we used to respond to these unprecedented circumstances, Foundation staff spent 2020 devising an alternative means of supporting critical research on important topics at this critical juncture.

The Foundation's focus of granting pivoted to support new, innovative research studying:

- Nursing leadership's role in the impact and response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Nursing leadership's role in addressing health care inequities
- Issues of inequity within the nursing profession itself