

**USNA NATIONAL RESOLUTION 2021**

**TOPIC: IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION GUIDING THE REDUCTION OF CARBON EMISSIONS CREATED BY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES**

**SUBMITTED BY: Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH**

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WHEREAS, Globally, the greatest contributing factor to increased carbon emissions from the health field has been medical retail at 33.1%, hospitals at 28.6%, and ambulatory health care services at 18%. 38% of these emissions are from heating, water and electricity generation, 22% from transport, and 10% are from pharmaceutical and chemical sectors; and

WHEREAS, The United States (US) healthcare system accounts for 10% of national carbon emissions. Increasing air pollutants were estimated to account for 16% of all deaths in 2015. The healthcare sectors of the US, Australia, Canada, and England release approximately 748 million metric tons (MT) of greenhouse gases per year; and

WHEREAS, The US healthcare system emits 547 megatonnes (Mt) of CO<sub>2</sub>, compared to 342 Mt from China and the 249 Mt from the entire European Union. While China is the largest greenhouse gas contributor, the US surpasses China in healthcare-related emissions; and

WHEREAS, Rising greenhouse gases and temperatures increase the severity and frequency of natural disasters. Consequences of these events include significant mental and behavioral conditions, including anxiety, depression, alcohol and substance abuse, post-traumatic stress, and suicide. For example, following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, suicide attempts among women living in temporary housing increased 15 times compared to regional averages; and

WHEREAS, Increasing carbon emissions are responsible for approximately 172-404 premature deaths, 171 hospital admissions, 11,000 asthma exacerbations, and 54,000 respiratory symptoms in the US alone. The healthcare industry can reduce carbon emissions by 33 MT of CO<sub>2</sub> by using LEED certified buildings; and

WHEREAS, The Cleveland Clinic installed 1,650 light fixtures using 75% less energy and costing \$950,000, which will be returned in three years through reduced kilowatt hours. By converting to LEED Certified buildings, hospitals have the potential for significant financial gains, outweighing the initial investment; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) advocate for increased education within hospitals regarding the effects increased carbon emissions have on population health, as well as medical practices conducive to decreased carbon emissions; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA publish an article in *Imprint* and on the NSNA website to educate its constituents on carbon emissions created by hospitals, if feasible; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA advocate for LEED certifications for healthcare facilities through education on the advantages of these certifications, as well as advocate for alternative, non-carbon energy sources (such as wind and solar energy) for the heating and cooling of buildings; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA send a copy of this resolution to the American Academy of Nursing, American Nurses Association, American Hospital Association, American Medical Association, World Health Organization, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, National League for Nursing, and all other organizations deemed appropriate by the NSNA Board of Directors.