

# Transforming Nursing Education: The 2021 AACN *Essentials*

**Presentation to the  
National Advisory Council on  
Nurse Education and Practice  
February 3, 2023**

# TODAY'S PRESENTERS



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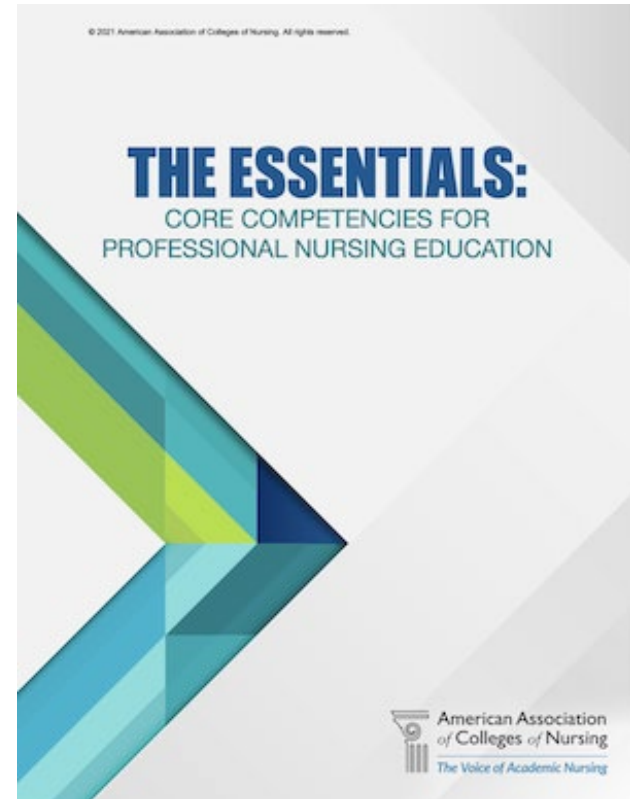
# Objectives

- ✓ Describe the new model for nursing education based on the 2021 AACN Essentials, including the transition to competency-based education.
- ✓ Understand how the Essentials support the preparation of nurses for readiness to practice.
- ✓ Provide an update on the status of AACN's work on implementing the Essentials with a focus on strategies for implementation.
- ✓ Answer questions related to the Essentials.

# What are the Essentials?

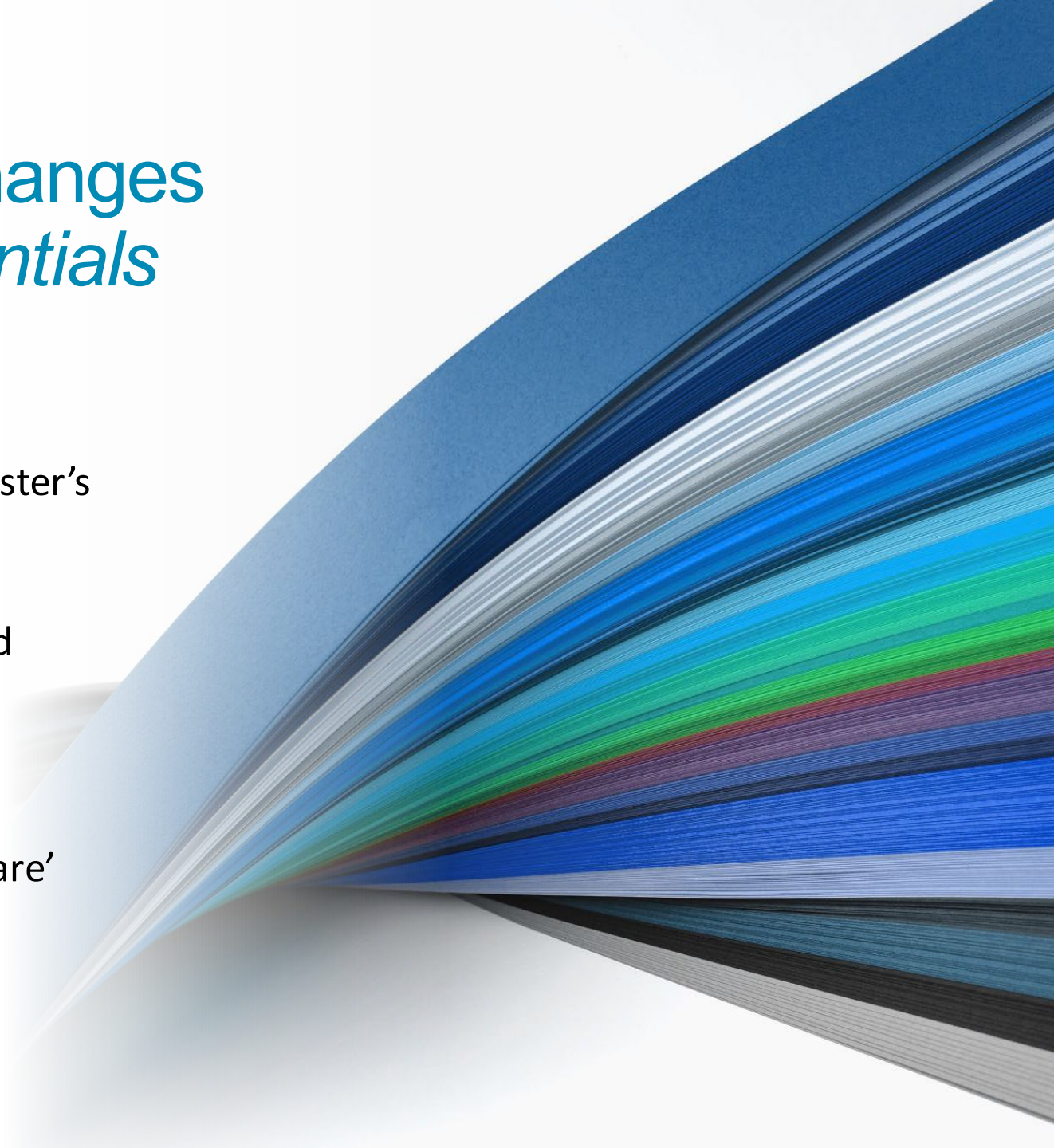
***The AACN Essentials*** provide:

- an education framework for the preparation of nurses
- guidance for the development and revision of nursing curricula
- expectations for teaching, learning, and assessment



# Primary Changes 2021 *Essentials*

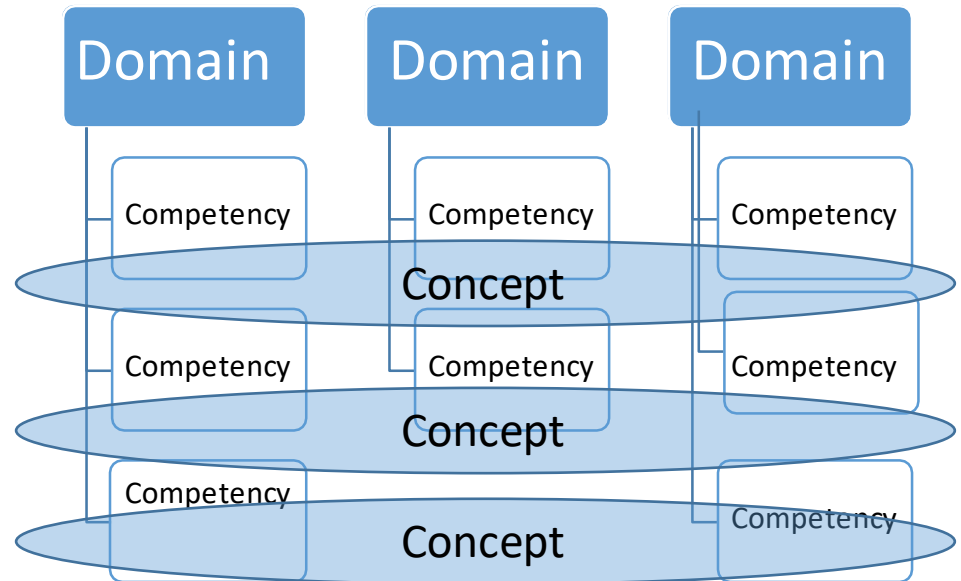
- One document for baccalaureate, master's and DNP degree programs
- Competency-based framework
- A new model for nursing education
- Four 'spheres of care' for entry-level programs



# Essentials Framework

Competency-based approach to education.

Competencies are organized within 10 domains and cut across 8 concepts.



# 10 Domains

Domain 1: **Knowledge for Nursing Practice**

Domain 2: **Person-Centered Care**

Domain 3: **Population Health**

Domain 4: **Scholarship for Nursing Discipline**

Domain 5: **Quality and Safety**

Domain 6: **Interprofessional Partnerships**

Domain 7: **Systems-Based Practice**

Domain 8: **Informatics and Healthcare Technologies**

Domain 9: **Professionalism**

Domain 10: **Personal, Professional, and Leadership Development**

# 8 Core Concepts

- » Clinical Judgment
- » Communication
- » Compassionate Care
- » Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- » Ethics
- » Evidence-Based Practice
- » Health Policy
- » Social Determinants of Health



# Competencies

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Are a set of expectations which, when taken collectively, demonstrate what learners **can do** with what they **know**.

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Represent clear expectations made explicit to learners, employers, and the public.

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Visibly demonstrated and assessed over time, in different contexts and settings.

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Cross all areas of professional nursing practice.

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# New Model for Nursing Education

## *ESSENTIALS* MODEL

### LEVEL 1

#### *AACN Essentials*

Entry-Level  
Professional Nursing Education  
sub-competencies

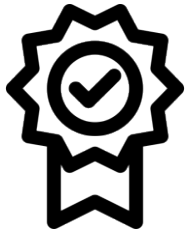
Used by programs preparing a  
nurse for an initial professional  
nursing degree.

### LEVEL 2

#### *AACN Essentials*

Advanced-Level Nursing  
Education  
sub-competencies  
**--and--**  
Specialty/role requirements /  
competencies

Used by programs preparing a  
nurse for an advanced nursing  
practice specialty or advanced  
nursing practice role.

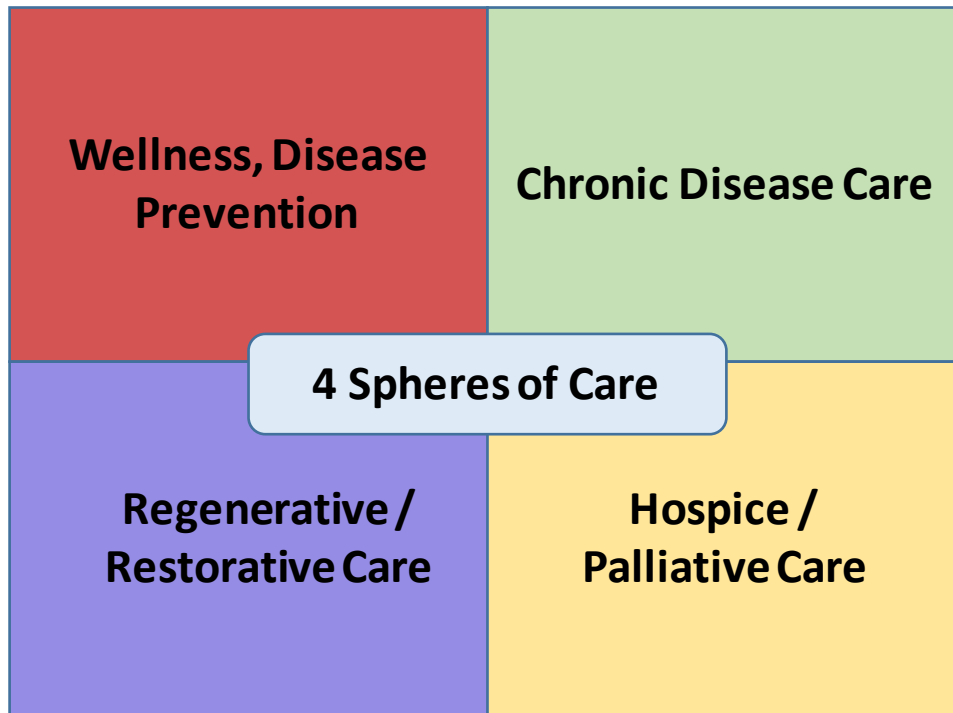


## DOMAIN 5

# Quality and Safety

Competency		Entry Professional Practice	Advanced Nursing Education
5.3	Contribute to a culture of provider and environment safety.	<p><b>5.3a</b> Identify actual and potential level of risks to providers within the workplace.</p> <p><b>5.3b</b> Recognize how to prevent workplace violence and injury.</p> <p><b>5.3c</b> Promote policies for prevention of violence and risk mitigation.</p> <p><b>5.3d</b> Manage own personal well-being and resiliency.</p>	<p><b>5.3e</b> Advocate for initiatives that support a culture of work environment safety (people, process and technology), including risks and strengths.</p> <p><b>5.3f</b> Create a just culture reflecting civility and respect.</p> <p><b>5.3g</b> Create a safe and transparent culture for reporting incidents.</p>

# Four Spheres of Care



The competencies accompanying each domain are designed to be applicable across four spheres of care.

# Current Issues in Nursing Education

Multiple degree paths in nursing education are messy and confusing!

Variability in program length, scope, expectations, and quality of degree programs

Inability to articulate that which is uniquely the discipline of nursing

Differentiating between technical and professional levels of nursing practice

Educating more *practice-ready* nurses

# Re-envisioning the Essentials

- It became clear that the Essentials did not need a “revision” – but rather – needed to be “*re-envisioned*”
- The Essentials reflect the beliefs and aspirations of the membership of AACN and practice partners

## ***Our Goal:***

Create a re-envisioned *Essentials* to be a path to the future of nursing education



# Stakeholder Feedback



# AACN Membership Voted to Approve April 2021





# Timeline for Implementation

“..the pathway to fully implement the new *Essentials* will be an extended process that may take three years or longer.”



# Impact of Transition to CBE

- » Common language and expectations for graduates – faculty, employers, other health professionals, students, and the public
- » Preparation of more “Practice Ready Nurses”
- » Promotes Academic-Practice partnerships
  - Joint design of curriculum, learning experiences, and assessment scenarios
  - Opportunities for new models of education and practice
  - Sharing of resources to strengthen education and workforce
- » Ability to build on competencies across education programs/degrees and careers
- » Opportunities to build efficiencies through merging and sharing of data/information

# Practice Expectations Related to CBE

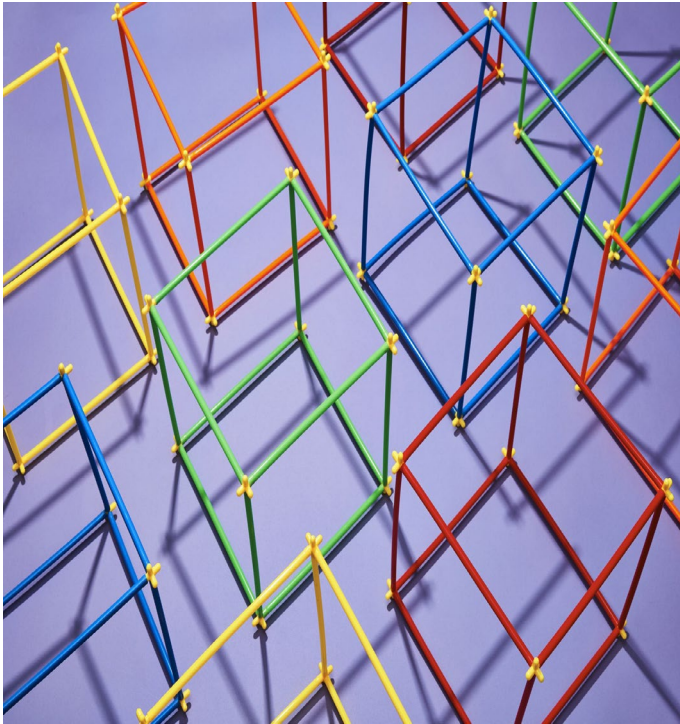
## » **Entry-Level Professional Nursing Programs**

- No specific number of hours designated
- Varied experiences (direct and indirect care) in all four spheres of care and with diverse populations and ages
- Immersion experience allows for practice synthesis
- Learners demonstrate attainment and integration of all Level 1 sub-competencies

## » **Advanced-Level Nursing Education**

- Structured, faculty designed practice experiences
- Number of practice hours vary based on specialty/role
- Minimum of 500 practice hours in the discipline required for demonstration of advanced level sub-competencies

# Technology Working Group



- Developed recommendations on using technology to share data and information among schools, healthcare settings, and regulatory bodies.
- Highlighted importance of common data standards/language to allow communication across sources.
- Identified criteria schools can use to evaluate products and tools developed by vendors to support the implementation of the *Essentials*.

***Vision for Sharing Data and Information Across Nursing Education, Practice, and Regulation***

# Importance of Data and Information for Successful CBE Implementation

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- Curricular mapping and revision
- Tracking individual and aggregate student competency attainment
- Analyzing program outcomes
- Generating reports for regulatory bodies
- Designing “Precision Education” experiences for students
- Sharing curricular resources across schools/programs
- Students able to have a digital record of competency attainment across lifetime



# AACN Support to Facilitate Implementation of the *Essentials*

## Appointed a Steering Committee

- Monitor process, identify issues, and recommend resources to support implementation
- Current initiatives: Member school survey, *Essentials* informative document for practice partners

## Faculty Development

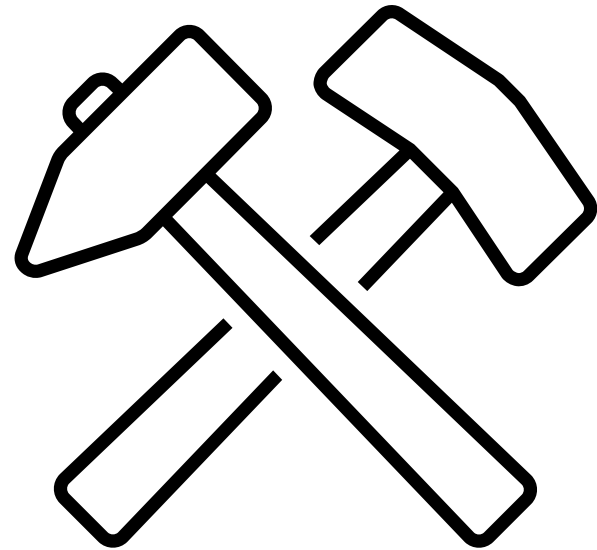
- Webinars
- AACN conference presentations
  - Faculty development conference – Regional CBE workshops
- Champion & Coaching Programs

## Continue Stakeholder Engagement

- Practice organizations, CCNE

# Essentials Tool Kit

- Competency-based education resources
- Integrative teaching and learning strategies
- Online searchable database
- Video library



# Assessment Working Group

- Methods to best measure competency in nursing education need further exploration and a design that will challenge students and prepare them for practice.
- An expert panel of multidisciplinary competency-based education assessment subject-matter experts is needed to guide this work.
- **Charge:**
  - identify the role AACN should take in addressing competency assessment and possible strategies for competency assessment, understanding that while processes may vary, outcomes should not vary
  - provide guidance regarding AACN's role in faculty development for assessment/evaluation.



# Information Sharing Initiatives

- Champion Program
- Collaboration with regional groups
- Formal collaboration between AACN and AONL
- American Nurses Foundation Grant
- Johnson and Johnson Grant
- Video and other educational development for practice partners
- Academic-Practice partner convenings in March and October



**OPPORTUNITY  
AHEAD**

# Re-imagining & Strengthening Academic-Practice Partnerships

- » Addressing challenges together:
  - Clinical sites
  - Immersive clinical experiences
  - Faculty shortages
  - Acutely ill patients
  - Nurse stress, burnout, turnover





**How can we help  
you?**