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### ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses

A current ethical issue that has been affecting nurses greatly is COVID-19. This virus not only effected the health of citizens physically but also mental stability working during this pandemic. COVID-19 has impacted the way healthcare systems deliver care dramatically. Prior to the virus hitting the United States, there were not a lot of shortages in health care supplies and very few nursing shortages were present. Now, that we are starting to see a decrease in numbers of populations being infected by the virus, there is an extreme shortage of nursing staff and medical supplies like gloves, 10mL saline flushes, mechanical ventilators, and more. This brings me to my next point, justice. During this pandemic there was a limited supply of mechanical ventilators for patients who were being affected by the virus. Physicians and nursing staff had to critically think before placing a patient on a ventilator to help maintain their airway. Many patients suffered extreme hypoxia and were not able to be comforted because there were no mechanical ventilators available. Patients were placed on BiPAPs maxed out, just to get by. This way of treatment was not doing justice for all patients. Picking and choosing who gets what based on the supply causes a huge ethical dilemma in healthcare settings. Also, the shortage in PPE caused numerous complications statewide. Nurses were not able to fully protect themselves from the virus and patients were being exposed to different strands of the virus due to the lack of PPE hospitals were able to account for.

COVID-19 has also caused nurses to go on strike and riot due to the way they were being treated and pay incentives. "Leaving their patients to join picket lines raised serious ethical issues for these clinical nurses. These included the principles of 'nonmaleficence', the nurses' duty to do no harm and 'beneficence', the duty to do good for patients. Going on strike meant that nurses could no longer be sure that they were adhering to these two principles. The ethical dilemma facing them was that not going on strike would compromise patient safety due to workforce shortages and low morale" (McKenna, 2020). Nurses left patients at bedside to protest causing patient safety issues and did not allow nurses to advocate for their patients in an appropriate way. This issue affects the ANA code of ethics for nurses' principle that states the nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient. Patients suffered from the nursing shortages and were not able to receive the best quality of care. Also, nurses suffered due to burn out from the shortage of nurses. Many times, nurses had to work long hours, most days of the week just to provide care for patients. This affected nurses physically and mentally.

Overall, COVID-19 seems to be decreasing as time goes on and populations are being vaccinated against the virus. The number of deaths has decreased since the summer of 2021 and the number of vaccinated people has increased significantly. People want to put an end to this virus and healthcare horror. As time goes on we as a whole will all learn from this pandemic and ways to improve the code of ethics for nursing for the future.

## Reference

McKenna, H. (2020, October 1). *Covid-19: Ethical issues for Nurses*. International journal of nursing studies. Retrieved March 3, 2022, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7529394/>