

Andre A. Rosario, PhD, RN

2023 AAHN H-31 Pre-Doctoral Research Grant

Summary

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Since receiving the H-31 Pre-Doctoral Research Grant, Andre Rosario successfully defended his dissertation entitled *A Permanent Solution: Internationally-Educated Nurses and International Nurse Migration Policy, 1989-2009* at the University of Pennsylvania and graduated with his PhD in Nursing in May 2024. Andre's dissertation is a history of Filipino nurses in the U.S. and their political action around international nurse migration policies, focusing on the efforts of the Philippine Nurses Association of America between 1989 to 2009.

Since the Philippine Nurses Association of America formed in 1979, and especially between 1989 through 2009, the organization grew to become an influential stakeholder in policies related to international nurse migration due to its unique position in the United States but closely tied to institutions and policy stakeholders in the Philippines. This dissertation is organized chronologically and thematically, with each chapter focusing on a different policy sphere and Filipino nurses' strategies for political action to influence each policy. In 1989, PNAA leaders tried to shape federal immigration policy. The PNAA President Filipinas Lowery attended meetings with Charles Schumer (then a member of the House of Representatives from Lowery's district) and spoke at a Congressional subcommittee hearing in support of a bill called the Immigration Nursing Relief Act. The bill was ratified, and it created a temporary visa category specifically for foreign nurses, the H-1A visa as well as provided a more direct way for nurses on temporary visas to adjust their status to permanent residency. The PNAA's participation in the Congressional subcommittee hearing reflects a point at which immigration policy related to nursing workforce policy.

In the early 2000s, the PNAA sought to influence professional and state-level policies related to nursing licensure for internationally-educated nurses. Specifically, the PNAA organized a task force to convince the National Council of State Boards of Nursing to open a test site in the Philippines to administer the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). By bringing the NCLEX to the Philippines, Filipino nurses interested in migrating to the U.S. would have fewer expenses and more streamlined requirements. The PNAA coordinated efforts and communication between central government agencies in the Philippines and with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and in 2007, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing approved a test site in Manila, Philippines. The PNAA's role in linking nursing professional organizations in the U.S. to central government agencies in the Philippines reflected its network, its reach, and its capability to organize efforts to shape licensure policy for internationally-educated nurses.

From 2006 to 2009, the PNAA would help the Sentosa nurses, a group of nurses recruited from the Philippines and employed by Prompt Nursing Employment Agency, which assigned them

to work at health-care facilities from a New York-based company called SentosaCare. The recruitment company underpaid and overworked them, provided a short an inadequate job orientation before turning them over to take care of patients on ventilators, and disregarded other parts of their employment contracts. Furthermore, when the Sentosa nurses decided they had tolerated enough and resigned from their jobs, their employer retaliated and initiated civil, administrative, and criminal charges against the nurses. The PNAA joined a coalition of Filipino organizations and nursing organizations to advocate for the nurses. The Sentosa nurses' story marks a time when the international nurse recruitment industry grew in power over migrant nurses, so much so that, by the end of the first decade of the 2000s, a framework of ethical international recruitment practices and policies emerged.

In the past year, with the support of the award, Andre finished conducting oral-history interviews with PNAA leaders and archival research that was essential for his dissertation. Additionally, the grant resulted in presentations at multidisciplinary conferences such as the American Association for the History of Nursing, the American Association for the History of Medicine, the Social Science and History Association, and the Warren Susman Graduate History Conference hosted by the Rutgers Department of History.

Since finishing his PhD, Andre has moved forward with his academic career and started his new role as a Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at Rutgers University. There, Andre will be using his historical knowledge about Filipino immigrants in the United States to conduct community-based participatory research to promote Filipino immigrants' health outcomes. His historical dissertation has also aided him in conducting interdisciplinary research with historians and other nursing researchers, such as a forthcoming scoping review in *Nursing Outlook* about how nursing researchers have defined the goal of decolonizing nursing.