Today the profession is faced with multiple challenges. Nurses and nursing educators are revising nursing practice and school curricula to meet the ever-changing needs of society, including bioterrorism, emerging infections, and disaster management. Advances in technology, the rising acuity of hospitalized clients, and early discharge from health care institutions require nurses in all settings to have a strong and current knowledge base from which to practice. In addition, nursing along with the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation, through the Last Acts Campaign, is taking a leadership role in developing standards and policies for end-of-life care. The End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium, offered collaboratively by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the City of Hope Medical Center, has brought end-of-life care and practices into the nursing curricula.

Nursing practice can now be found in multiple care settings, including health care institutions and foundations, the community, and the home. In addition, nurses are active in political and lobbying groups, social and not-for-profit agencies, and work on establishing social health care policies. These activities increase nursing’s public viability and, at the same time, increase the public’s awareness of professional nursing. The challenge now is to prepare professional nurses to deliver complex, multifaceted care in the client’s home.