

Larissa Africa, MBA, BSN, RN, FAAN

BIOGRAPHY

Larissa Africa is the CEO & President of Versant Healthcare Competency Solutions™ and is responsible for its strategic and operational leadership. Larissa has spent two decades implementing, managing, and leading strategies to develop nursing organizations. Larissa has developed a competency-based nurse residency program, one that is considered a gold standard in the industry. As a pioneer in the transition to practice space, she led the deployment of a competency-based model that integrates and standardizes nursing workforce development across the entire healthcare continuum, addressing high-demand areas such as long-term care, home health, and advanced practice nursing. Larissa's collective body of work continues to change the landscape of how healthcare organizations integrate and sustain workforce retention and practice solutions. Larissa holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Mount St. Mary's University, a Master's Degree in Business Administration: Health Care Management from University of Phoenix, and an Executive Women in Leadership certificate through Cornell University. She is an author of numerous highly recognized publications, book chapters, a national and international speaker. Larissa was inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing in 2021.

STATEMENTS

1. Statement describing the significant issues facing AONL and potential strategies to address them.

Nurses are well-positioned to address the unprecedented challenges in preparing, attracting, and developing the nursing workforce through policy action. AONL has an opportunity to increase member engagement to apprise lawmakers at all levels of the need for nursing workforce development funding and address the underlying issues impacting how we engage, develop, and support nurses. Strategies AONL can implement to address this challenge can include surveying members to identify barriers towards policy engagement, providing a series of educational sessions to minimize fear around policy dialogue, and creating strategies CNOs can provide their nurses on how to navigate policy discussions.

2. Statement describing the applicant's perspective of diversity, equity and inclusion and strategies AONL can take to demonstrate its commitment.

As a Filipino immigrant, I have persevered despite the stigmatization, xenophobia, and outright racism that permeates our society. We must address the implicit and explicit barriers that form obstacles to empowering those representing different cultures, ethnicities, and gender identities. My life's work has been in transforming such aspirational goals into operational realities. AONL has an opportunity to reinforce zero tolerance against discrimination in all its forms, create resources for leaders to operationalize AONL's Guiding Principles on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, and actively celebrate role models who have provided leadership in healthcare from disenfranchised communities.