

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF NURSES IN DIAGNOSTIC ERROR PREVENTION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND CALL TO ACTION

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BACKGROUND

Nurses have always been a part of the diagnostic process, however, their roles are often marginalized as not “diagnostic.” We believe that if nurses are encouraged to practice to the full extent of their training, education, and experience and key barriers are removed, they will be perceived (and perceive themselves as integral diagnostic team members

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1) Describe a framework for optimal nursing engagement in the diagnostic process through three interconnected spheres of role functioning: diagnostic triage, patient empowerment, and interprofessional teamwork
- 2) Identify four barriers to full nurse engagement in diagnosis, and potential facilitators to each barrier

SPHERES OF ROLE FUNCTIONING

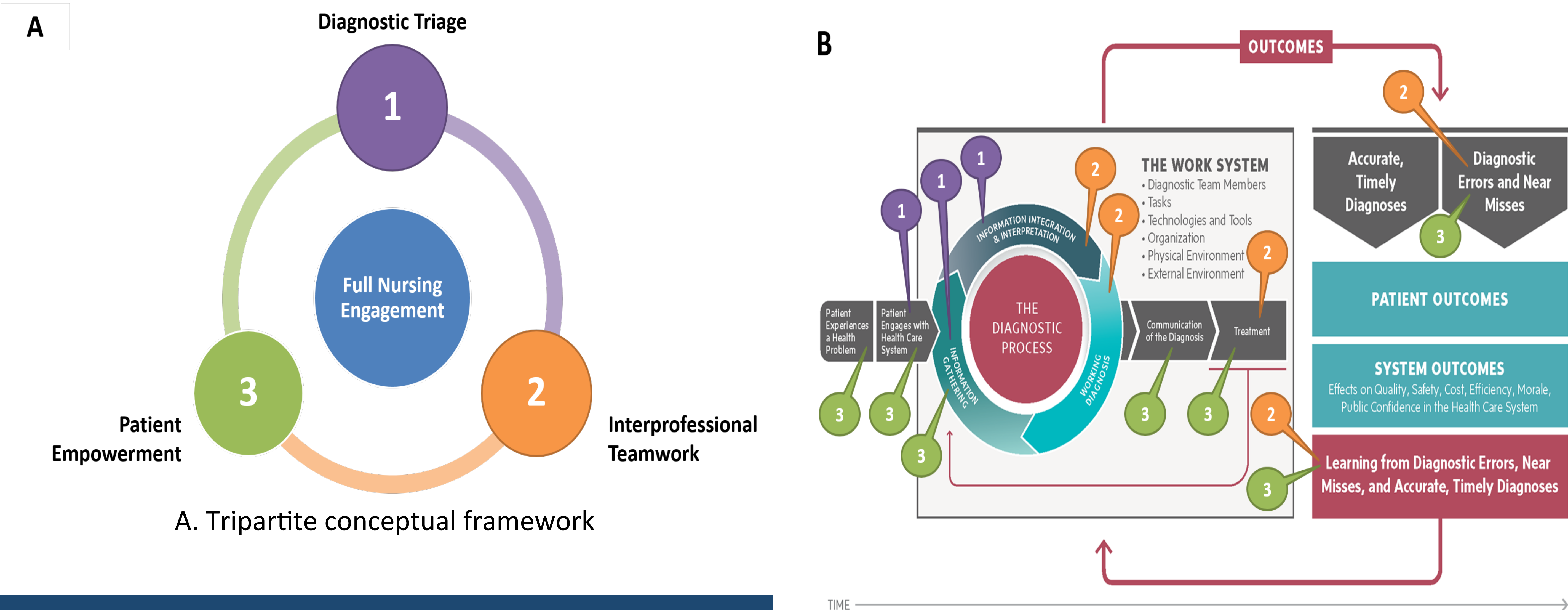
Diagnostic Triage: Triage is already considered a nursing function, explicitly calling it diagnostic triage formalizes this nurse role as a diagnostic one and highlights the role of the nurse in identifying critical conditions including sepsis, pulmonary embolism

Patient Empowerment: Nurses already play key roles in patient education and engagement, nurses could empower patients to become active participants in the diagnostic process

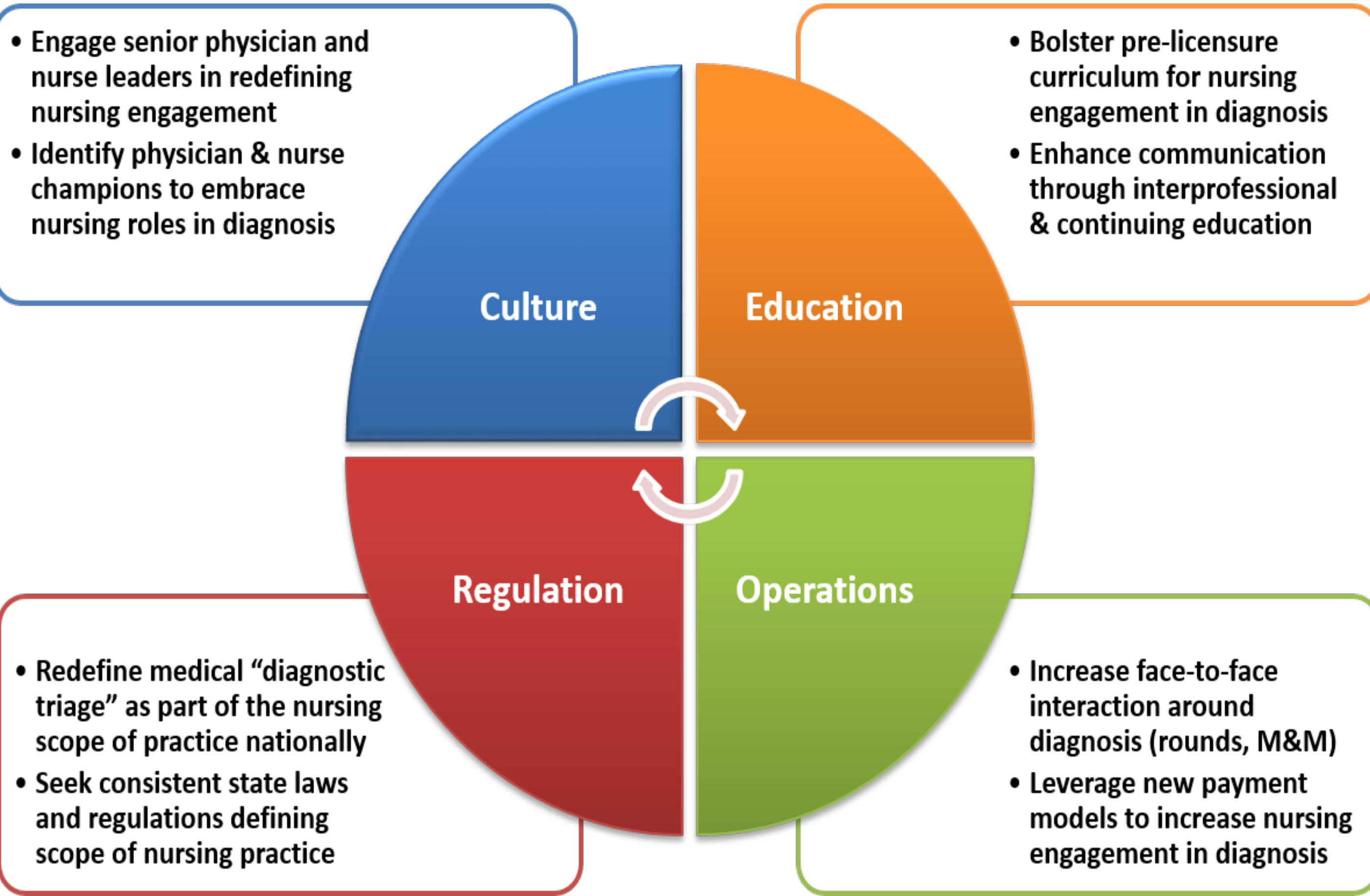
Interprofessional Teamwork: Nurses can play crucial roles in closing the loop through care coordination and facilitating team communication to address missed diagnostic screening opportunities and failed reporting of diagnostic test results



FRAMEWORK FOR NURSING ENGAGEMENT IN DIAGNOSIS



BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO NURSE ENGAGEMENT IN DIAGNOSIS



CONCLUSION

Nurses have been a driving force behind major quality improvement and patient safety efforts, and must take part in helping lead efforts to reduce diagnostic error. Contributing to the diagnostic process is both in line with nurses’ competencies, roles and responsibilities and with nurses’ duty to provide safe, effective care. Healthcare leaders can work to change education, culture, operational logistics, and regulation and ultimately make each a facilitator to nurse engagement in medical diagnosis.