

SUNA Guidelines: Creating a White Paper

Introduction

The Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates (SUNA) is a professional community of urologic nurses and associates that is committed to enhancing the professional lives of its members, and their expertise in improving the health of urologic patients and their families. SUNA routinely creates documents for its members in order to promote and standardize urologic patient care and education.

A white paper is an in-depth report or guide about a specific topic and the problems that surround it. Choosing the right topic is essential to a white paper; it argues or presents a specific position or proposes a solution to a problem, often addressing the audience outside of the organization. White papers may also express a policy statement by soon on a specific topic or issue. Topics may be chosen by the SUNA board, a task force, individual members, or at the suggestion of other stakeholders. Within these topics, white papers can encompass statements regarding topics that have not been fully investigated or the available information is out-of-date. Other considerations include:

1. Audience: The white paper must be written with a target audience in mind, most frequently SUNA members, and should be focused toward the need of these members. Also consider the *kinds* of people who will be reading the white paper beyond SUNA members: fellow healthcare professionals, patients and families, other stakeholders.
2. Expertise: The white paper should match and highlight the SUNA's expertise, and be something That is of value to the organization. The document should provide a complete investigation including external research and internal knowledge. The organization's own know-how informs the content that is included and how it is compiled. The white paper should address a topic around which little content has been written already and thus fill a content of knowledge gap.
3. Problem-Based and Solution-Focused: White papers should identify and address a particular problem, and should be relevant and timely to your field. The document may focus on issues such as common dilemmas, new trends, changing techniques, etc. The white paper must have a proposed solution or recommendation to answer the problem, based on a thorough examination of the problem and potential solutions.

White Paper Preparation

Process

The process of creating white paper should begin with identification of a panel or task force chair. This individual will then work with a designated liaison from the SUNA board, or may be granted authority to proceed independently from the SUNA board with an agreement to frequently update the SUNA board. This panel or task force chair will then work to identify experts and consultants who have the necessary experience and insight to contribute to the topic of the white paper. This can include can clinical experts, individuals with literature review experience or individuals who have been instrumental in the creation of similar focused documents in the past.

After deciding on the specifics of the white paper, the panel or task force will proceed with a review of the available evidence, developing a summary that will form the basis for the white paper. The scope of the topic can be determined at this point. The task force will accomplish its work via electronic means,

such as email, a video conferencing, or phone conferences. In-person meetings, if necessary, should be scheduled in conjunction with the SUNA annual conference or symposium.

White papers can generally be completed within 9-15 months, to ensure that they maintain a contemporary relevance for SUNA members, especially if the topic is one of emerging significance to the care of urologic patients or impacts professional scope of practice. While white papers can vary in length based on topic, a reasonable goal (minus references) would be 10 to 20 double-spaced pages.

Once completed, the finished white paper will be submitted to the SUNA board for final approval.

Summary of process for SUNA white paper development

- Formulate topic
- Identify panel or task force members
- Define scope of the topic or issue
- Literature review
- Analysis of literature and inclusion of expert opinion
- Form conclusions
- Draft white paper
- Submit to SUNA board

Research

The selected topic must be comprehensively researched, including from online references, industry resources, and internal society documents. This research will form the background on the topic, as well as the basis for a discussion of the key findings in the literature. White papers are data-focused, so they must be supported by research.

Expert Opinion

The panel or task force opinion is a fundamental part of the creation of each white paper. The responsibility of the panel is to review the literature and the available evidence, offering expert opinion when the evidence is sparse or inconclusive. Consensus can be reached via a variety of methods including simple voting or anonymous survey methodologies such as the Delphi method.

Publication

After approval by the SUNA board, the panel or task force will submit the document to ***Urologic Nursing***, where it will be reviewed by the editor and sent for peer review. After feedback and any necessary edits, the white paper will be published in ***Urologic Nursing*** and the SUNA board may choose to make it available for direct download from the SUNA website.

Updates

Each white paper will be updated on a 3 to 5 year basis, in order to keep the information current for SUNA members and the organization stakeholders. Any such updates will follow the process of panel identification, reevaluating the scope of the document, and updated literature review and panel recommendations for changes to the original document.

White Paper Format

White papers generally follow a standard document format, with the conclusion at the end. In a white paper, the content and research throughout the document informs the reader and increases understanding of the problem or issue.

Accurate Title

A good title should clearly indicate what the member will learn from the white paper.

Abstract

The abstract offers a brief overview of white paper's main points.

Problem Statement

The problem statement specifies the issue or problem the white paper will address, and this needs to be defined and placed into a context relevant to the reader.

Background

This section provides the background information to the issue or problem. The content in this section may be detailed and technical or broad and high-level. If original research is completed for the white paper, the methods should be communicated. The paper should not value quantity over quality, and should strive to avoid repeating a message or recommendation similar to another group or stakeholder.

Solution/Recommendations

Based on the preceding information, the solution or recommendations are presented. It is developed and showcases the expertise of the authors/taskforce/society.

Conclusion

This section summarizes the white paper's major findings and recommendations or solutions.

References

All sources used to develop the white paper must be collected and cited.