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Leadership in the history of the Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem – Santa Catarina Chapter, 64 years

Protagonismo na história da Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem –
seção Santa Catarina, 64 anos

Protagonismo en la historia de la Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem –
Sección Santa Catarina, 64 años

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To historicize the 64 years of the *Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem* – Santa Catarina Section, from its creation in 1962 to 2026, highlighting major milestones, challenges, and achievements. **Methods:** Historical documentary research, with primary sources being books, articles, and management reports. Secondary sources were scientific articles about the history of the entity available in digital format. Documentary analysis was conducted in three phases: data collection, organization, and analysis. **Results:** The identified historical records were organized into four thematic categories: General history of the Entity; ABEn/SC and the relationship between science, education, and research in Nursing; Political Issues Led by ABEn/SC; and Significant Events Organized by ABEn/SC. The findings show the leading role of the Brazilian Nursing Association - Santa Catarina Section in the reflections on the centenary of the *Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem*. **Final Considerations:** The Santa Catarina section stands out for its investment in the debate about nursing education, the workforce situation, and the requirements for qualified professional practice. Especially since 1980, the section has excelled in formulating proposals to strengthen democracy within the organization, in the fight for the universal right to health, and for the valorization of the profession.

Descriptors: History of Nursing; Nursing Societies; Nursing; Role of the Nursing Professional; Professional Associations.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Historicizar os 64 anos da Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem – Seção Santa Catarina desde sua criação em 1962 até 2026, destacando grandes marcos, desafios e enfrentamentos. **Métodos:** Pesquisa documental histórica, sendo as fontes primárias, livros, artigos e relatórios de gestão. As fontes secundárias foram artigos científicos acerca da história da entidade disponíveis em forma digital. Análise documental em três fases - coleta, organização e análise dos dados. **Resultados:** Os registros históricos identificados foram organizados em quatro categorias temáticas: Histórico geral da Entidade; ABEn/SC a relação científica, educação e pesquisa em Enfermagem; Questões Políticas Protagonizadas pela ABEn/SC e; Eventos significativos organizados pela ABEn/SC. Os achados mostram o protagonismo da Seção Santa Catarina no âmbito das reflexões sobre os cem anos da Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem. **Considerações Finais:** A seção Santa Catarina é referência pelo investimento no debate acerca da educação em enfermagem, da situação da força de trabalho e dos requisitos necessários para um exercício profissional qualificado. Especialmente, a partir de 1980, a seção se destaca na formulação de propostas para fortalecer a democracia na entidade, na luta pelo direito universal à saúde e pela valorização da profissão.

Descritores: História da Enfermagem; Sociedades de Enfermagem; Enfermagem; Papel do Profissional de Enfermagem; Corporações Profissionais.

Descriptors: History of Nursing; Societies, Nursing; Nursing; Nurse's Role; Professional Associations.

Descriptores: Historia de la Enfermería; Sociedades de Enfermería; Enfermería; Rol de la Enfermera; Corporaciones Profesionales.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Realizar una revisión histórica de los 64 años de la *Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem* – Sección de Santa Catarina— desde su creación en 1962 hasta 2026, destacando los principales hitos, retos y dificultades. **Métodos:** Investigación documental histórica, siendo las fuentes primarias libros, artículos e informes de gestión. Las fuentes secundarias fueron artículos científicos sobre la historia de la entidad disponibles en formato digital. Análisis documental en tres fases: recopilación, organización y análisis de los datos. **Resultados:** Los registros históricos identificados se organizaron en cuatro categorías temáticas: Historia general de la entidad; ABEn/SC: la relación con la ciencia, la educación y la investigación en enfermería; Cuestiones políticas en las que ha tenido un papel protagonista la ABEn/SC; y Eventos significativos organizados por la ABEn/SC. Los resultados ponen de manifiesto el papel protagonista de la Sección de Santa Catarina en el marco de las reflexiones sobre los cien años de la Asociación Brasileña de Enfermería. **Consideraciones finales:** La sección de Santa Catarina es un referente por su compromiso con el debate sobre la formación en enfermería, la situación de la fuerza laboral y los requisitos necesarios para un ejercicio profesional cualificado. En particular, a partir de 1980, la sección destaca en la formulación de propuestas para fortalecer la democracia en la entidad, en la lucha por el derecho universal a la salud y por la revalorización de la profesión.

Descriptores: Historia de la Enfermería; Sociedades de Enfermería; Enfermería; Rol de la Enfermera; Corporaciones Profesionales.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The *Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem* (ABEn, Brazilian Nursing Association) is a cultural, scientific, and political entity that represents the foundation of organizational bodies within Brazilian Nursing⁽¹⁾. ABEn was founded in 1926, in the context of structuring the profession in the country. Nurses recognized the importance of developing, among their own peers, guidelines for professional education and for a practice grounded in ethical principles. Other pillars that support professional practice accompanied this historical process, such as producing nursing-specific knowledge aimed at establishing the discipline within the broader field of health sciences. Furthermore, disseminating the knowledge produced to society led to the creation, in 1932, of a dedicated publication, the *Anais*

de Enfermagem, which, from 1954 onward, became known as the *Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem* (REBEn, Brazilian Nursing Journal)⁽²⁾.

In 2026, ABEn celebrates its 100th anniversary. The organization's trajectory reinforces the principles present at its founding, adding the important perspective of political advocacy for the regulation of the profession and for the hiring of qualified professionals in health services. From the second half of the 1980s onward, the entity gained national prominence for its political engagement in the struggle for the universal right to health, contributing to the formulation of a broadened concept of health and defending the construction of the *Sistema Único de Saúde* (SUS, Brazilian Unified Health System). ABEn also stood out in efforts to improve and protect the nursing workforce. In this process, ABEn/SC (Santa Catarina Chapter) played a leading role.

This text brings to the forefront historical highlights of the *Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem* – Santa Catarina Chapter (ABEn/SC), which in 2026 celebrates the maturity of its 64 years of associative life, having been the 22nd Chapter created in Brazilian territory. The decision to establish ABEn/SC emerged in 1962 through the initiative of the only group of nurses at the time, composed mostly of religious sisters who worked in hospitals in Greater Florianópolis^(3,4). The nurses from Santa Catarina were affiliated with ABEn/RS, but the distance made active participation in the entity's activities difficult. Upon realizing the possibility of creating ABEn/SC, these pioneering nurses sought to determine the number of nurses residing in Santa Catarina by consulting the State Statistical Service, finding only 11 professionals - an amount that, at that time, was sufficient for the official founding and installation of ABEn/SC on March 13, 1962⁽⁵⁾.

The first Board of Directors was composed of the following nurses: President: Sr. Cacilda – Otilie Hammes; Vice-President: Flérida Goudel Cardoso; First Secretary: Sr. Maria Rita – Alice Rigo; Second Secretary: Sr. Ligória – Editte Prim; Treasurer: Sr. Romana – Carmela Longo; Audit Committee: Helena Frieda Makros; Hilda Anna Krisch; Sr. Maria José – Marta Locks; Journal Committee: Sister Hélio Hinterkolz – Silvia H. Interkolz; Public Relations Committee: Hilda Ana Krisch; Legislation Committee: Ursula Engel. It is worth noting that Hilda Ana Krisch served the second term of the Central ABEn (now ABEn National) from 1938 to 1941^(4,6-8).

From that point on, the few members began to organize themselves, meet regularly, and deliberate on possible activities to promote Nursing. This included defining and making political decisions necessary for the development of the profession in the state. In this sense, it involved advocating for the hiring of new nurses for hospitals that were being inaugurated in Florianópolis, such as Edith Gama Ramos Hospital (currently Joana de Gusmão Children's Hospital) and Governador Celso Ramos Hospital, ensuring managerial and physical spaces for high-quality professional nursing practice⁽⁵⁾. As public services planned the creation of new hospitals in Florianópolis, the ABEn/SC Board began to participate technically in their planning, organization, and operation.

Another of ABEn's struggles was the creation of the *Sistema Conselho Federal* (Cofen, Federal Nursing Council) and the *Conselhos Regionais de Enfermagem* (Coren, Regional Nursing Councils). Coren/SC, headquartered in Florianópolis, was established two years after Cofen, which was instituted in 1973⁽⁹⁻¹¹⁾. Throughout history, these two representative organizations of nursing have experienced moments of alignment and divergence, particularly regarding their conception and practices of internal democracy and their political engagement in the struggle for the right to health and citizenship rights.

This manuscript describes the activities of ABEn/SC since its founding, without concern for chronological order. The aim was to outline the course of the history experienced within this now sixty-year-old section. The study highlights new participatory ways of acting, intense professional struggles, and strong determination to engage in debates regarding the professional advancement of Nursing. It shows that challenges are ongoing, shaped by political-professional debate, the social context, and demographic, environmental, and morbidity-mortality changes in the population. The national political, social, economic, and health landscape influences thinking and policy formulation at the state level.

OBJECTIVE

To historicize the 64 years of the *Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem* – Santa Catarina Chapter, from its creation in 1962 to 2026, highlighting major milestones, challenges, and struggles.

METHODS

Qualitative historical documentary study, covering the period from 1962 to 2026, in which the initial scope corresponds to the founding of ABEn/SC and the final point corresponds to the centennial year of ABEn. The methodological procedure was carried out in accordance with the documentary method, following its three stages⁽¹²⁾.

The first stage involved defining the available documentary sources and determining which would be included. For selecting the sources, the criteria of direct positional, intentional voluntary, and qualitative sampling were followed. Both primary and secondary sources were included. Primary sources consisted of the '*Livro dos 50 anos da ABEn-SC*'⁽³⁾, the '*Série Memórias ABEn-SC: Contribuições da ABEn-SC para a Enfermagem Catarinense*'⁽³⁾, and ABEn/SC management reports (2013 and 2016 terms)⁽¹¹⁾. Secondary sources included published articles on ABEn personalities, articles about ABEn Sections, and official websites of ABEn and its chapters.

In this stage, data collection and organization were carried out during the months of February and March 2026. Based on what had been organized, the research activities were distributed among the authors of the study. After extensive reading of the primary and secondary documentary sources, the authors engaged in discussions to structure and extract the data.

In the second stage of the documentary method, a critical evaluation of the data and sources was conducted, and during this phase the structure of the article was defined, including the selection of facts and events led by ABEn/SC in interface with ABEn National. At this point, the organization and format of the results presentation were agreed upon, respecting the facts and events related to each administrative term.

The third stage involved presenting the facts, interpreting them, describing historically relevant aspects for this study, and developing the research conclusions. The analysis was carried out with an understanding of the historical context in which the information was produced, aiming to identify thematic categories that would enable a deeper and more critical understanding of the historical documents through a contextualized analysis. This approach brings into reflection the protagonism of ABEn/SC in the historical trajectory of ABEn National. In the contextualized historical and sociocultural reconstruction of ABEn/SC, the aim was to build a deeper narrative of the associative movement in Santa Catarina, using documentary evidence to support the conclusions⁽¹²⁾.

As this is a documentary study, approval by an ethics committee was not required; however, the authors adhered to the principles of Resolution No. 510, of April 7, 2016⁽¹³⁾.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This text is grounded in historical records; however, thematic choices and emphases were made. Above all, the aim was to extract issues that may serve the current challenges of nursing in Santa Catarina and in Brazil. To this end, aspects considered relevant throughout ABEn/SC's historical trajectory in the political, economic, social, health, and nursing spheres were highlighted. The presentation of the results and discussion was divided into four central focuses: The first addresses a general historical overview of the organization; the second presents aspects related to ABEn/SC's involvement in nursing education; the third examines the political issues led by ABEn/SC; and the fourth discusses major events significant to Brazilian nursing that were held in Santa Catarina and organized by ABEn/SC.

General history of the Entity

When addressing the general historicity of ABEn/SC, it was decided to focus on broad aspects of this process, as well as on the changes in its headquarters over time until settling at its current address. Each memory carries a meaningful and symbolic trace for understanding the decisions made within the Section. Since its founding, ABEn/SC has faced several challenges that required important political decisions. Among these, one stands out: the need to include nurses in the technical-scientific category within the staffing structure of health services. Until then, salaries were similar to those of Nursing Practitioners, Nursing Attendants, and Nursing Assistants. This led the newly appointed first President,

Sr. Cacilda (Otilie Hammes), to seek out the State Secretary of Health at the time to discuss the issue. After one year of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Santa Catarina (ALESC), Law No. 3.175/63 was enacted, placing nurses in this category and allowing for a differentiated salary compatible with their training. This was a major victory for the newly created organization⁽⁴⁾.

At the time, 11 nurses were working in the state, seven of whom were religious sisters (three working in Florianópolis and four in the countryside). Of the remaining four nurses, two were in Florianópolis and two in the interior. On March 13, 1962, a meeting was held with the State's nurses and the President of ABEn (National), Marina de Andrade Rezende, to establish ABEn/SC⁽¹⁴⁾.

Due to the small number of nursing professionals in the state and an even smaller contingent of nurses engaged in the political movement of the profession in the 1960s, a small group practically alternated leadership terms to ensure the continuity of ABEn/SC. Evidence suggests that this group of nurses, upon creating ABEn/SC, gained greater strength, especially due to the significance of advocating for the profession across various areas of population health needs and professional training.

In health services - particularly in the few existing hospitals, which were limited and precarious in meeting the population's health demands - there was a lack of formally qualified nursing personnel. The situation was aggravated by the quantitative deficit of nurses, as there were no undergraduate nursing programs in the state until 1969; only a Nursing Assistant Training Program existed⁽⁵⁾.

The first Nursing Assistant course in Santa Catarina was conceived in 1957 by Sister Cacilda (Otilie Hammes) and Hilda Anna Krisch. Both were appointed by the Order of Divine Providence to plan and implement the creation of the state's first School for Nursing Assistants. The request had been made by the State Secretary of Health at the time, Mr. Paulo Fontes, to the Mother Superior during the 1st Nursing Studies Week held in May 1956, organized by Hilda Anna Krisch in Florianópolis. The Madre Benvenutta School for Nursing Assistants was then founded in 1959, under the direction of Sister Cacilda^(4,8).

From the beginning, it was understood that only organized action, through ABEn, alongside public agencies, could bring about changes in services aimed at positively impacting the quality of health care provided to the population of Santa Catarina. The credibility of ABEn/SC as a nursing institution led to increasing invitations for associated professionals to participate in the organization of public service examinations, examination boards, and events within health services⁽¹¹⁾.

The profile of struggles within ABEn/SC administrations has always been marked by confrontation and defense of the professional category. The prevailing attitude was to build an organization through shared leadership, which meant fostering a perspective and coexistence among professionals - members and even non-members - as protagonists of their time, within a broader social context in which redemocratization was the path forward.

Another point of emphasis is ABEn/SC's relationship with schools, training programs, and health care institutions - the latter comprising the largest number of nurses, nursing technicians, and nursing assistants⁽¹¹⁾. Regarding schools and training programs, the openness for ABEn/SC to participate in collegiate bodies proved favorable and constructive, enabling achievements, critical debates, and guidance for innovative practices.

One aspect that must be highlighted in this section is the creation of ABEn/SC's *Núcleos*¹ in the 1980s. Since the first administration of the *Movimento Participação* (MP), under the presidency of Prof. Dr. Jorge Lorenzetti, the organization invested heavily in the creation and strengthening of the *Núcleos*, recognizing their importance in creating conditions that would encourage the participation of the professional category in the entity's decision-making processes⁽¹¹⁾.

For an organization to exist, it needs a physical space, properly organized, which can serve not only as a place of memory but also as a space for gatherings, exchanges, meetings, planning, and identity. In the early years of ABEn/SC, the organization's assets consisted only of file folders and printed materials. Its headquarters was a room provided by the Madre Benvenutta School for Nursing Assistants. However, the imminent sale of the building accelerated discussions about relocating and the need to acquire essential furniture and equipment. In February 1972, during a Board meeting, the possibility of transferring the headquarters to the Department of Nursing at the *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (UFSC, Federal University of Santa Catarina), located at Rio Branco Avenue, number 51, was raised. After approval from the Department's administration and faculty, ABEn/SC's address

became the faculty room of the Department of Nursing (NFR)/UFSC as of March 1972⁽¹¹⁾. This space, however, was not owned by the organization and often generated problems and conflicts. In this context, in 1976, the idea of securing a larger space for meetings and event organization was revived. The upcoming XXIX Brazilian Nursing Congress (CBEn), scheduled to take place in Santa Catarina in 1977, was seen as an opportunity to obtain resources for purchasing a permanent headquarters. During a General Assembly, the proposal from Coren/SC for ABEn/SC to occupy one of its rooms was discussed and approved.

The 41st CBEn took place in 1989, in Florianópolis, at UFSC, during the administration presided over by Prof. Dr. Denise Elvira Pires de Pires. This congress was organized and carried out by the nursing community of Santa Catarina, and the financial outcome of the event made it possible to purchase a new headquarters, larger and with better conditions for the organization's operations. This new headquarters was located at Rua General Vieira da Rosa, 55, in downtown Florianópolis, SC. ABEn/SC remained at this location until 2001, when a new administrative and social headquarters, measuring 561.49 m², was acquired during the administration of Prof. Dr. Gelson Luís de Albuquerque. This headquarters houses ABEn/SC to this day (2026) and offers a privileged, central location with easy access for the organization's members, close to urban, interstate, and intermunicipal transportation terminals.

The records related to ABEn/SC and its history, still dispersed across loose papers and lacking a structured documentary collection for systematic consultation, began to attract the interest of members who wished to initiate the organization of a documentary and iconographic archive. The Board recognized the importance of creating an action plan for preserving ABEn/SC's Memory. With this perspective, the ABEn/SC Memory Working Group (GT Memória - ABEn/SC), established by the Board of the 2007–2010 administration, led by President Master Helga Regina Bresciani, organized its work with the aim of documenting the organization's history and sharing the activities to be carried out during the commemorations with the nursing community and the society of Santa Catarina.¹

During the 2010–2013 administration, presided over by Nurse Maristela Assumpção de Azevedo, the book commemorating ABEn/SC's 50 years was produced, including the development of each administration up to 2010⁽¹¹⁾. Between 2010 and 2016, debates within ABEn National centered on the federalization of the organization. ABEn/SC was the first section to lead the entire organizational process toward federalization and presented the proposal to the *Conselho Nacional* of ABEn (CONABEn) in 2014^(15,16). Discussions were extensive but ultimately did not result in the proposed transformation. Federalization would have meant that the sectional administrations operated independently from ABEn National, becoming responsible for their own financial management and obligations. Other important developments during this administration included investment in the inclusion of students in ABEn discussions, strengthening the Forum of Schools, and encouraging the participation of Nursing Assistants and Technicians.

"Considering the importance of the individuals who led ABEn – Santa Catarina Chapter over time, we include the names of the personalities who presided over the chapter throughout its 64 years of history (1962–2026). They are:

- Sr. Cacilda (Otilie Hammes) – 1962–1964
- Maria Marlene Bernardes de Medeiros – 1964–1966
- Eloita Pereira Neves – 1966–1968
- Lydia Ignês Rossi – 1968–1970
- Nelcy Terezinha Pacheco Coutinho – 1970–1972/1976–1980
- Ingrid Elsen – 1972–1976
- Jorge Lorenzetti – 1980–1984
- Jonas Salomão Spricigo – 1984–1985/1985–1986
- Denise Elvira Pires de Pires – 1986–1989
- Vera Maria Antunes de Fonseca – 1989–1992

1 Pioneer Working Group of ABEn/SC Memory: Anita Terezinha Zago - Coordinator; Astronn Souza Capuá Teixeira, Cleusa Rios Martins, Lais Raquel Bottega, Lygia Paim, Maria Lígia dos Reis Bellaguarda, and Nelcy Terezinha Coutinho Mendes.

- Tânia Soares Rebello – 1992–1995
- Anita Terezinha Zago – 1995–1998
- Gelson Luiz de Albuquerque – 1998–2001
- Ângela Maria Alvarez – 2001–2004/2004–2007
- Helga Regina Bresciani – 2007–2010
- Maristela Assumpção de Azevedo – 2010–2013
- Maria Lígia dos Reis Bellaguarda - 2013–2016
- Magada Tessman Schwalm – 2016–2019
- Jussara Gue Martini - 2020–2022/2022–2025.
- Helen Bruggemann Bunn Schmitt – 2025–2028

ABEn/SC and the relationship between science, education, and research in Nursing

In ABEn's centennial history, we have observed the strong relationship between the organization and the country's nursing schools. In most states, schools were created first, and subsequently faculty members initiated the movement to establish the local ABEn chapter. Santa Catarina is an exception to this pattern, as it has been in several aspects of the profession's struggles⁽¹⁷⁾.

The first Undergraduate Nursing Program in Santa Catarina, created in 1969, had its initial momentum in 1966, when ABEn/SC, through its President, Eloita Pereira Neves, sent a memorandum to the UFSC Rectorate outlining the reasons and justifications for establishing a nursing school. Following this request, the acting Rector, Polydoro Ernani de São Thiago, appointed a Commission responsible for conducting a preliminary study on the feasibility of creating a Nursing Program. Approved in 1968 through Resolution No. 34, which authorized the creation of the Faculty of Nursing, the program was implemented in 1969^(18,19).

Within the broader context of vocational education in various fields, around 1968, this topic became a matter of discussion within the nursing community. Within ABEn/SC, debates emerged regarding the creation of the Nursing Technician Program. Nursing would benefit from an increased number of qualified workers on its teams, and these mid-level technical professionals would bring new vitality to associative life. ABEn/SC promptly produced extensive written communication to the health and nursing community regarding the role and rights of these new professionals.

The organization also engaged in a struggle against the intrusion of other professionals into its exclusive activities, such as physicians offering specialization courses in Nursing. Rejecting this improper interference became a central advocacy issue for ABEn/SC, whose Board was presided over, from 1964 to 1966, by Maria Marlene Bernardes de Medeiros^(4,11).

After the creation of the Undergraduate Nursing Program at UFSC, ABEn/SC and the faculty of the program carried out the curricular reform required by Law No. 5.540/68, known as the University Reform Law. ABEn National initiated debates through national and regional seminars, mobilizing faculty and students with the aim of collectively constructing an educational project for Brazilian nursing⁽²⁰⁾.

Stricto sensu graduate education in nursing began in 1972 at the Anna Nery School of Nursing (EEAN) of the *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRJ, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), when it launched the Master's Program in Fundamental Nursing. Attentive to the needs for training and scientific development, the nursing community of Santa Catarina created, in 1976, the Graduate Program in Nursing at UFSC (PEN/UFSC), whose first Coordinator was Prof. Ingrid Elsen, President of ABEn/SC during the 1972–1976 administration^(21,22).

Later, in 1992, UFSC Nursing established the Doctoral Program in Philosophy of Nursing, beginning its first cohort in 1993. This initiative strengthened the training of researchers capable of contributing to education, health services, science, and health technology. Throughout this trajectory, UFSC has been an unquestionable partner of ABEn/SC, actively leading and participating in state and national projects.

Part of the scientific movement in Nursing led by ABEn National was the creation of *Centro de Estudos e Pesquisa em Enfermagem* (CEPEN, Center for Studies and Research in Nursing), with its initial milestone in 1971, when Haydée Guanais Dourado proposed its establishment⁽²³⁾. The proposal was formalized with its incorporation into ABEn's new statute, implemented beginning in 1976, during the administration of Ieda Barreira e Castro (1976–1980). The 1st National Nursing Research Seminar (SENPE) took place

in 1979 at the Ribeirão Preto School of Nursing (EEUSP/RP) of the *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP, University of São Paulo) becoming an important event in the history of Brazilian Nursing⁽²⁴⁾.

Against this backdrop, ABEn/SC administrations, over time, built and followed paths that left as a legacy the understanding that a profession is not built solely through education⁽¹¹⁾. It also requires the voluntary and conscious contribution of politically engaged individuals, aware of their particular historical-social role, who work collectively to replace everyday obstacles with actions that promote people, professionals, and services.

The policy of joint work with Nursing Schools has been present throughout the historical trajectory of ABEn National and the Santa Catarina Chapter. Throughout the 1980s, with the *Movimento Participação* leading the organization, ties with the state's schools were strengthened, promoting specific meetings to debate nursing education. In the 1990s, through an initiative of ABEn National and its sections, the State Meetings of Nursing Schools were launched by the Education Commission, later becoming institutionalized within the Section as the Forum of Schools. This was an important milestone for the profession, as through this work, carried out by the Education Directorate, efforts were made to define goals and deepen the mission of nursing education. With the Professional Practice Law, enacted in 1986 and regulated in 1987 (Law No. 7.498/1986), it became essential to involve the entire professional category in the struggle for implementing what had been achieved, aiming to qualify the workforce and the care provided. The nursing schools of the state responded to ABEn/SC's call and actively participated in this debate⁽²⁵⁾.

In the context of the struggle for the professionalization of nursing attendants, in 1986 UFSC, through the Department of Nursing and the Network for the Promotion of Nursing Development (REPENSUL), coordinated by Prof. Dr. Maria de Lourdes de Souza, presented a project that enabled a partnership with ABEn/SC, Coren/SC, the Municipal and State Health Secretariats (SMS/SES) of Florianópolis, the Associations of Municipalities, the *Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina* (UNISUL), the Universidade do Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI), the Universidade do Oeste de Santa Catarina (UNOESC), the *Universidade de Concórdia* (UNC), and health institutions for the professionalization of Nursing Attendants through the Supplementary Nursing Assistant Course. ABEn/SC participated in this project and indirectly facilitated the commitment to develop a State Professionalization Plan (1987); for this, it relied on the work of the Director of Education, Prof. Dr. Kenya Schmidt Reibnitz⁽⁷⁾.

Subsequently, the changes brought about by the regulation of technical-level vocational education led to a broader discussion during the State Seminar on the Profile and Curricular Guidelines for Secondary-Level Nursing Education, held in Florianópolis in June 1998. The event was promoted by ABEn/SC with support from UFSC's Nursing Assistant Project. The final report of this seminar presented the proposal for a modular Technical Nursing Program, including the training of Nursing Assistants. The report was presented at the 1st National Seminar on Secondary-Level Nursing Education, promoted by ABEn and held in Brasília (DF) from June 30 to July 2, 1998⁽²⁶⁾.

Still within the context of the partnership between ABEn/SC and UFSC's Nursing Assistant Project, the Department of Nursing implemented the Specialization Course in Teaching Methodology for Nursing Professionalization (1999–2000), which trained 129 nurses in the state. The training of Nursing Assistants in Santa Catarina became a political-professional movement, fostering political engagement alongside professional education, and contributing to both hospital and primary care networks—public and private - through the training of 5,860 Nursing Assistants between 1996 and 2000⁽²⁷⁻²⁹⁾.

ABEn/SC also participated in the Project for the Classification of Nursing Practices in Public Health in Brazil – CIPESC/CIE/ABEn. In 1996, the national coordinator of the CIPESC/CIE-ABEn project, Nurse Maria José Antunes, Director of Professional Affairs at ABEn, invited the President of ABEn/SC to coordinate the CIPESC Project in the Southern Region. Two members of the organization were nominated for this role: Maria Helena Bittencourt Westrupp and Vera Lúcia Guimarães Blank, both PhDs and faculty members of the Department of Public Health at UFSC. The CIPESC project was articulated and approved by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. It was developed from 1996 to 2000 and officially launched at the 10th National Health Conference (CNS). The project aimed to contribute to transforming nursing practices in public health in Brazil, grounded in the principles of the Brazilian health reform, the population's health-disease profiles, and the recognition of nursing's role in health⁽⁷⁾.

Another movement that consolidated ABEn's commitment to professional education was the creation, in 1994, during the presidency of Prof. Maria Auxiliadora Córdoba Christófar, of the National Seminar on Guidelines for Nursing Education (SENADEN), which celebrates its 20th edition in 2026. This event has become the main national forum dedicated to issues in nursing education, bringing together educators, program coordinators, researchers, and experts in nursing education, with the purpose of reviewing, analyzing, and proposing new ways to enhance professional training.

ABEn/SC has always participated actively in the debate on the National Curricular Guidelines (DCN) and succeeded in hosting the 2nd SENADEN, themed 'Guidelines for Nursing Education in Brazil,' in Florianópolis/SC. The event was organized by the Section with support from nursing schools in Santa Catarina. Seeking to reorganize ABEn's events, during the administration of Prof. Dr. Rosa Maria Godoy Serpa da Fonseca (2016–2019), the seminars were integrated and held jointly. Thus, SENADEN began to be conducted together with the National Seminar on Nursing Diagnosis (SINADEN). This new format debuted in Florianópolis in 2018, marking the 16th SENADEN/13th SINADEN⁽³⁰⁾.

In 2001, nursing education was impacted by the approval of the new National Curricular Guidelines (DCN) for Undergraduate Nursing Programs and for Technical-Level Vocational Education. In this context, broad discussions were held within ABEn National and its sections, aiming to strengthen the qualification of these professionals. The Santa Catarina Nursing School Forums were intensified, sharing the experiences of the various programs and strengthening the integration of the seven ABEn/SC nuclei at the time (Itajaí, Concórdia, Tubarão, Chapecó, Blumenau, Lages, Joinville)⁽¹¹⁾.

The State Forums of Nursing Schools in Santa Catarina, as an initiative arising from the relationship between ABEn/SC and the state's higher-education and secondary-level nursing schools, have become an important space for representing Santa Catarina's nursing community in discussions related to education, health, teaching, and professional training. These forums mark ABEn/SC's ongoing commitment to nursing education.

Political Issues led by ABEn/SC

ABEn/SC has always acted to represent the profession in cultural, political, academic, and technical-scientific movements, with variations in its stance throughout its history⁽¹¹⁾.

Since its emergence in 1926, ABEn has been present in all significant moments in the profession's history. During the 1980s, it experienced a period of intense debate regarding its role, organizational structure, and model of representation, as well as the political project to be defended within the field of health⁽³¹⁾. In these debates, the nursing community of Santa Catarina played a leading role. It contributed to formulating critiques of ABEn's role at the time, of the organization's structure, and, through its leadership, was fundamental in shaping the ideas that would constitute the *Movimento Participação* (MP), a national movement committed to valuing the profession, democratizing ABEn, defending the right to health, and advocating for democracy in the country⁽³²⁾.

The MP of ABEn, born, developed, and consolidated in the 1980s, marked nursing in that historically significant context, with major repercussions and developments within ABEn/SC⁽³²⁾. The year 1980 is a historical milestone, as a slate aligned with this ideology - called the 'Chapa Participação' - was organized, with Prof. Dr. Jorge Lorenzetti as its presidential candidate. The slate won the elections for the leadership of ABEn/SC and thus took on the challenge of putting into practice proposals for change regarding ABEn's role, organizational structure, and decision-making processes⁽³³⁾.

The leadership in Santa Catarina understood ABEn's national character and the importance of the Movement's proposals for the profession in the country. In this sense, they participated actively in the formation of a nationally oriented MP, running in the 1984 elections for the leadership of ABEn National, in opposition to the '*Chapa Compromisso*,' which represented the conservative stance criticized by the Movement.

In 1984, the '*Chapa Participação*' won the elections, but the National ABEn leadership used a maneuver to reverse the results, annulling the elections in eight states, including Santa Catarina, where the slate led by colleague Prof. Dr. Jonas Salomão Spricigo had been elected⁽³⁴⁾.

From 1984 to 1986, ABEn/SC and colleagues from several states across the country organized an intense and systematic opposition movement, denouncing the fraud and declaring that the national

mandate was illegitimate. The situation became unsustainable, and new general elections for ABEn were called for 1986. During this period, the MP grew stronger and won the national elections as well as elections in the vast majority of Brazilian states. The '*Chapa Participação*,' which ran for the National Directorate of ABEn, was led by Nurse Dr. Maria José dos Santos Rossi and included Prof. Dr. Jorge Lorenzetti on the legislation committee and Prof. Dr. Jonas Salomão Spricigo on the fiscal council⁽³⁴⁾. In 1986, Prof. Dr. Denise Pires was elected in Santa Catarina, coordinating an administration committed to implementing the principles of the MP. Within the MP's broader struggles - articulating the profession's demands and Brazilian society's demands for democracy and the right to health - the participation of Santa Catarina's leaders in the 8th National Health Conference (8th CNS) stands out. The 8th CNS, a landmark in the history of health in Brazil, took place in March 1986, at a time when the MP had not yet taken office in ABEn National leadership. Professors Dr. Jorge Lorenzetti and Dr. Denise Pires participated as delegates of the 8^a CNS, among the representatives of the *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* (CUT, Unified Workers' Central).

Looking at history is always instructive and inspires critical reflection. Hence, 46 years after the MP, we can highlight several state and national achievements: the democratization of the organization and its strengthening as a space for representing the profession within Santa Catarina's society; the shift away from a submissive role toward governmental policies and the interests of multinational companies in the health sector, reinforcing an independent and proactive stance in formulating policies for debate in the fields of Health and Nursing; and the strengthening of the organization through increased participation of the professional category in decision-making processes and in events promoted by the entity. These events began to address, in addition to technical issues, debates on political-professional matters and on the country's health policy, as well as the important role of resistance and opposition to misconduct within Cofen, culminating in the outcome of the ethical proceedings against Gilberto Linhares Teixeira, whose right to practice the profession was revoked for 10 years by Cofen's plenary on April 13, 2012⁽³⁴⁻³⁶⁾.

The struggle for transparency within the Cofen/Regional Councils System took place in the 1990s, when Nurse Gilberto Linhares Teixeira assumed the presidency of the autarchy and several reports of irregularities began to surface, including issues related to the Council's own election. ABEn/SC, following a decision by its members in a General Assembly (AGS), took on a leading role in that movement. The breaking point in the conflicts with Cofen was the assassination of nurses Edma Rodrigues Valadão and Marcos Otávio Valadão on September 20, 1999 - he then serving as President of ABEn/RJ, and she as President of the Rio de Janeiro Nurses' Union. Numerous formal and informal statements were issued by ABEn National and the State Sections demanding clarification of the contract killings of these professional leaders. After 25 years of impunity, the Judiciary of the State of Rio de Janeiro, in 2024, sentenced Gilberto Linhares Teixeira to 26 years in prison, to be served in a closed regime. Edma and Marcos Valadão were the authors of the complaints that triggered the Federal Police's 'Operation Predator,' during which Gilberto was arrested for ideological falsification, embezzlement, document forgery, and misappropriation of funds while serving as President of Cofen⁽³⁷⁾.

In 2008, within a national context marked by fear and threats, the nursing community of Santa Catarina faced the challenge of the electoral process for Coren. The movement was organized within ABEn/SC, and assertive, competent participation in the electoral process resulted in the victory of Slate 3 – '*Participação*'⁽³⁸⁾. The elections were won on merit and through the work of a group that believed in the importance of 'Participation' as a foundational principle of associative practice, and in the strategic value of joint action among professional organizations to achieve advances. Nurse Dr. Denise Elvira Pires de Pires assumed the presidency of Coren/SC, inaugurating a new way of leading the institution and also advocating for changes throughout the System. After the arrest of Gilberto Linhares, the Cofen / Regional Councils System distanced itself from criminal scandals and moved closer to a political agenda focused on defending professional causes. In this process, despite many challenges and disagreements, the establishment of alliances among national nursing organizations around concrete objectives stands out, such as the regulation of the 30-hour weekly workday. In Santa Catarina, since 2008, the practice of building alliances among representative nursing entities has continued successfully. Nationally, the construction of a permanent and systematic articulation aimed at formulating shared strategic priorities may be a promising path toward a much stronger Brazilian nursing profession over the next 50 years.

Among national movements, ABEn/SC continued to fight for adequate working conditions, notably the just demand for regulating the 30-hour weekly workday for nursing workers, establishing this issue as a priority in the joint efforts of Coren-SC and ABEn-SC. Another significant struggle was the opposition to legislation intended to regulate the practice of medicine, known as the 'Medical Act', which attempted to interfere with the professional practice of Nursing. ABEn/SC, in partnership with Coren/SC, played a prominent role in this fight for the recognition and dignity of nursing workers, the largest workforce in health. The defense of the 30-hour workweek, of decent and safe working conditions, and the resistance to the Medical Act are highly relevant banners⁽³⁹⁾.

Associative life is the integration of the will of a group that thinks collectively and finds in its ideals the strength to fight. Life within ABEn is unique because, as previously mentioned, it has influenced - and continues to influence - generations both within and beyond the profession. Breaking with undesirable practices that distance the profession from democratic principles is an ethical imperative that demands extremely complex actions, especially when the reality to be confronted unfolds in times of significant adversity. It is important to highlight that Prof. Dr. Angela Maria Alvarez, in addition to having served as President of ABEn/SC for two terms (2001-2004 and 2004-2007), was also President of ABEn National during the 2013-2016 administration, when she continued ongoing initiatives such as the 30-Hour Forum, among other activities, integrating Brazilian nursing in support of health and in defense of the *Sistema Único de Saúde* (SUS)⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Significant Events Organized by ABEn/SC

ABEn has always remained attentive to issues affecting the profession, with particular emphasis on nursing education and the defense of adequate standards for professional practice. As part of this process, the effective role of ABEn/SC stands out from its earliest years, both in promoting the profession and in fostering professional debate through the organization of the Brazilian Nursing Weeks® (SBEn), state conferences, school forums, SENADEN, SENPE, and CBEn^(24,41).

ABEn/SC has consistently implemented policies that reflect the aspirations and needs of the nursing community in Santa Catarina, and beginning in the 1980s, it intensified strategies to ensure that debates and reflections on the profession - both technical and political - reached the largest possible number of professionals throughout the state⁽¹¹⁾.

The Brazilian Nursing Congresses (CBEn) have been held since 1947. Beginning in the 1950s, they started to be hosted in different states of the Federation that had an ABEn section, as a way to decentralize the event and broaden member participation. The Santa Catarina section, founded in 1962, nominated the state to host the XXIX CBEn, scheduled for 1977, during the administration of Professor Nelcy Terezinha Coutinho Mendes. The proposal was approved at the *Assembléia Nacional de Delegados* (AND) in Salvador/BA. Following this decision, in 1976, a group led by Professor Dr. Ingrid Elsen, then President of ABEn/SC, visited Balneário Camboriú to select it as the event's venue. The official theme was 'The health situation in the country – implications for nursing practice,' and the congress took place at CITUR/Rodo-Feira in Balneário Camboriú/SC. A total of 1,639 participants registered. The collaboration and active involvement of undergraduate nursing students from UFSC deserve special recognition, as they served as monitors in various committees and contributed significantly to the event. Dr. Wanda de Aguiar Horta was one of the distinguished participants, attending to promote her book *The Nursing Process*. She also worked in UFSC's Graduate Program in Nursing as one of its collaborating professors⁽⁴²⁾.

The second CBEn organized by ABEn/SC took place in 1989, during the administration of Prof. Dr. Denise Elvira Pires de Pires. It was the 41st CBEn, which inaugurated the second National Directorate of the MP, presided over by Nurse Stella Maria Pereira Fernandes de Barros, with Prof. Dr. Jonas Salomão Spricigo as vice-president. The central theme of the CBEn was 'Challenges for Nursing in the 1990s,' and it brought together 3,594 Brazilian and international participants.

The congresses constitute privileged political spaces, as they gather professionals from across the country to discuss the event's theme, always related to emerging issues within the professional context^(24,43).

During the administration of Prof. Gelson Luís de Albuquerque, ABEn/SC agreed to host the 51st CBEn and the 10th Pan American Congress of Nursing Professionals, held from October 2 to 7, 1999, at

the Florianópolis Convention and Events Center (CENTROSUL). A total of 4,176 nursing professionals and students participated, coming from Africa, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, the United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Portugal, the Dominican Republic, Sweden, and Uruguay. With the theme 'Positioning Ourselves in the World and Building the Future,' the event culminated in the development of the Political-Professional Project for Brazilian Nursing and for Latin American Nursing, which continues to be used to this day by nursing organizations as a theoretical-methodological reference for professional action.

In 2010, the centenary year of Florence Nightingale's death, ABEn/SC, under the administration of Prof. Helga Regina Bresciani, MSc, was entrusted with hosting the 62nd CBEn. The congress brought together 4,600 participants from all Brazilian states, with greater representation from the South, Southeast, and Northeast regions, including 1,193 nursing students⁽¹¹⁾. The central theme was 'Professional organization and visibility.' During the event, the Laboratory for Research on the History of Nursing and Health Knowledge (GEHCES/UFSC) organized a booth designed as a historical ward. This was an innovation introduced by GEHCES in partnership with ABEn/SC, featuring nursing students dressed as nurses from different historical periods. It became one of the highlights of the congress - participants lined up to take photos with the models, including one dressed as Florence Nightingale.

Another highly significant event, conceived and led by ABEn/SC, was the International Seminar on Nursing Work (1st SITEn). The initiative was motivated by discussions brought to ABEn/SC regarding the increasing precarization of nursing work, along with reflections on which forms of professional representation would be most effective in confronting this issue. It was up to the President of ABEn National, Prof. Francisca Valda da Silva, MSc, and the President of ABEn/SC, Prof. Dr. Ângela Maria Alvarez, to coordinate the articulation among ABEn, FNE, the National Executive of Nursing Students (ENEEnf), and SINDSAÚDE/SC. The 1st SITEn took place in Florianópolis in August 2003 and included representatives from nursing organizations in several countries. In the final plenary, a political agenda for Brazilian nursing was approved, to be discussed and further developed in subsequent events, primarily concerning professional organization⁽¹¹⁾.

A significant event for Brazilian nursing is the National Seminar on Nursing Research (SENPE). At this event, the most recent research produced by Brazilian nursing is presented, and it also serves as a space for discussing the directions of scientific and technological production in the field⁽⁴⁴⁾. ABEn/SC also hosted the 14th SENPE in Florianópolis, with the central theme 'Research Policies in Nursing.'

Between June 6 and 8, 2018, the 16th SENADen and the 13th SINADen took place in Florianópolis, organized by ABEn/SC. The events focused, respectively, on debates regarding the National Curricular Guidelines and nursing education aligned with SUS, as well as the strengthening of nursing diagnoses, the Systematization of Nursing Care, and the Nursing Process as scientific foundations of care⁽⁴⁵⁾.

In 2020, under the auspices of the COVID-19 pandemic, ABEn/SC was scheduled to host the 72nd CBEn, but due to the difficulties faced globally, the event was postponed. With the central theme 'Universal Right to Health: Nursing in Debate,' the 72nd CBEn was held entirely online from August 25 to 28, 2021, during the administration of Prof. Dr. Jussara Gue Martini. The event fostered reflection on the pandemic context and reaffirmed nursing's political and social commitment to defending SUS and universal access to health⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Nursing needed to secure its place in the field of research, given its significant scientific output. The organization of events made it possible to reflect on practice and on the social determination of the health-illness process - professional practice that must be carried out through a cooperative action-reflection dynamic, building spaces of solidarity and collaboration. Within a dialogical and respectful relationship, foundations of healthy interpersonal relations, these efforts seek strategies for inclusion and collective appreciation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A limitation of this study is the fact that we did not conduct interviews with the presidents of ABEn/SC throughout the period. Nevertheless, the documentary sources made it possible to achieve the objective of this text.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF NURSING, HEALT AND EDUCATION

This text aims, through its narrative, to guide and support other researchers and those interested in the history of nursing to turn their attention to the history of ABEn's state sections, whose trajectories offer insight into the importance of ABEn in the professional life of nurses and in the construction of their professional identity. The debate surrounding the profession and its modes of organization is ongoing, and it is important to highlight that the development of shared agendas and joint political action constitutes a historical milestone in nursing in Santa Catarina, potentially signaling a promising national path.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From its emergence to the present day, the guiding purpose of ABEn/SC's practices and struggles has been the defense and recognition of the nursing profession within society. In this convergence, six decades have passed, traversing time and circumstances in diverse nuances and forms. It is important to emphasize that the alliance with various social sectors has contributed to the production of knowledge in health and nursing, aligned with the health realities of the population of Santa Catarina and with the defense of the right to health.

Thinking critically, combining boldness, struggle, and action, has been a guiding principle throughout ABEn/SC's history. And, especially since the 1980s, the alliance with social movements in defense of a more just and democratic society has been central, recognizing that health is multidetermined and more than the absence of disease. Over the years, the organization's practice has contributed to building a scientific and ethical nursing profession, strongly committed to SUS and to the exercise of citizenship. This stance is essential in the face of the plural realities of social life.

ABEn/SC and ABEn National hold the historical role of serving as spaces for constructing guiding principles for political-professional action, in defense of safe and high-quality practice, as well as the professional education that underpins it.

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