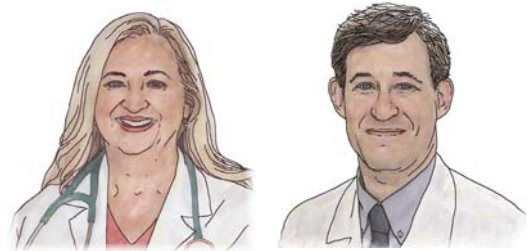


Editorial

CELEBRATING MAY—AND NURSING!

By Cindy L. Munro, RN, PhD, ANP, and Richard H. Savel, MD



Comedian Robin Williams said, “Spring is nature’s way of saying, ‘Let’s party!’”¹ May is the last month of spring, and it is a month of celebration. Holidays include May Day (May 1st), Cinco de Mayo (May 5th), Mother’s Day (the second Sunday in May), and Memorial Day (the last Monday in May). May is also a special time of celebration for nursing. National Nurses Week traditionally begins on May 6th with National Nurses Day and concludes on May 12th with International Nurses Day, which is also Florence Nightingale’s birthday. National Student Nurses Day is May 8th, and School Nurses Day falls on the Wednesday of Nurses Week. The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) National Teaching Institute (NTI)—the premier gathering of critical care nurses—is held in May of every year. Recognition and celebration of the contributions of nurses are appropriate all year long, but the special emphasis in May is appreciated.

A new global initiative to recognize and celebrate nursing was launched in February 2018. Nursing Now is a 3-year campaign focused on acknowledging and expanding the worldwide involvement of nursing in health.² Key components of the campaign are improving public perceptions of nurses, enhancing the influence of nurses, and maximizing nursing’s contributions to health and access to health care. Nursing Now is a collaborative effort with the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Organization. Nursing Now already has star power

on board; Her Royal Highness Catherine The Duchess of Cambridge (née Kate Middleton) is the campaign’s patron. The campaign will conclude in 2020, coinciding with the 200th anniversary of Nightingale’s birth.

The Nursing Now website ambitiously states, “We work to empower nurses to take their place at the heart of tackling 21st Century health challenges.”² This statement affirms that nurses are central to improving the health care system. The active involvement of nurses in advancing health care in all settings is crucial; nurses have both the capacity and the numbers to make a real difference.

Nurses’ capacity to drive change is centered in extraordinary knowledge and patient care skills. Critical care nurses are grounded by their initial nursing education, which enables them to care for patients and families throughout the life span and in a variety of settings. Additional specialty education is built upon this foundation, giving nurses who work in critical care the tools they need to care for the highly vulnerable patients and families entrusted to their care. Some nurses will pursue graduate nursing education at the master’s and doctoral level to expand their expertise and to contribute to the scientific base of critical care nursing. Many nurses pursue and achieve certification in critical care, as a visible recognition of their commitment to excellence. AACN offers certification in multiple specialties and subspecialties relevant to critical care practice for bedside nurses, nurse managers, educators, and advanced practice nurses.

Nurses are well positioned to advance change in the health care system because they are the largest

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“Nurses must be recognized and must recognize others for the value each brings to the work of the organization.”

group of health care clinicians worldwide, and they are integral to every aspect of health care. The United States has nearly 3 million registered nurses,³ and registered nurses are the largest group of health care providers. Registered nurses are also the largest component of the critical care workforce. In the United States alone, more than 500 000 critical care registered nurses work together with their colleagues (15 000 acute care nurse practitioners, 10 000 physician intensivists, and many other members of the critical care team) to meet the needs of critically ill patients and their families.⁴

Leveraging the power of nursing's capacity and numbers should be an overarching goal of any campaign to improve health. Particularly in critical care, nursing exemplifies both leadership and collaborative effort. Nursing Now will provide important opportunities to advance the role of nursing worldwide. We encourage nurses and other health professionals to follow the activities of Nursing Now as the campaign matures and to contribute to advancing its important goals.

Every May, AACN's NTI "offers learning, inspiration and celebration for high-acuity and critical care nurses."⁵ This year's conference in Boston will bring an estimated 7000 critical care nurses and their colleagues together for 4 days of celebration, mentoring, education, and companionship. NTI sessions offer up-to-date information about new research and evidence-based practice that invigorates patient care. Supersessions and interactions with colleagues provide inspiration. Recognition and celebration are central to NTI. Visionary Leadership Awards are presented to nurses and other critical care leaders for lifetime achievements. Individual and AACN Chapter Circle of Excellence Awards are celebrated. The AACN Distinguished Research Lecture is a celebration of outstanding critical care research. Units that have received Gold, Silver, and Bronze Beacon Awards along a journey for excellence are recognized during NTI. Attendees

leave NTI energized and empowered to improve their units and their care of patients and families.

Of course, nurses are not the only critical care professionals who deserve recognition and celebration! Meaningful recognition is one of 6 essential standards underpinning the AACN Healthy Work Environment Initiative. That standard is based on the idea that, "Nurses must be recognized and must recognize others for the value each brings to the work of the organization."^{6(p29)} A sampling of upcoming events relevant to recognizing the contributions of critical care team members includes

National Physician Assistants Day: October 6, 2018

National Physical Therapy Month: October 2018

National Radiologic Technology Week: November 4-10, 2018

National Pharmacists Day: January 12, 2019

National Women Physicians Day: February 3, 2019

Certified Nurses Day: March 19, 2019

National Doctors Day: March 30, 2019

Recognition is not a zero-sum game, where a win for one party can come only at the expense of a loss for others. Rather, recognition should be a "win-win." The celebrations of nursing that occur in May are a spring party that we can all enjoy!

The statements and opinions contained in this editorial are solely those of the coeditors in chief.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

None reported.

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