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DNA Reporter

The Official Publication of the Delaware Nurses Association

Constituent member of ANA

The mission of the Delaware Nurses Association is to improve healthcare in Delaware by the advancement of nursing.
Quarterly publication direct mailed to approximately 12,000 RNs and LPNs in Delaware.

The Impact of Shift Work and Long Hours on Nurses' Dietary Habits

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Nancy D. Rubino, EdD, MN, RN-BC, CNE

Nancy D. Rubino

Nancy Rubino graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with her BSN and then a Masters in Nursing as a medical-surgical clinical nurse specialist. She received her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Innovation from Wilmington University. Nancy is Board Certified by the ANCC as a Pediatric Nurse. In addition, she is nationally certified as a Child Care Health Consultant, QSEN trainer and earned the credential of Certified Nurse Educator. As a professor of nursing and now as professor emerita at Wesley College, Nancy's teaching and clinical practice at both the undergraduate and graduate levels included aspects of health promotion and wellness. Nancy provided leadership to the DNA as president and as chair of the Continuing Education Committee. Nancy continues service within DNA as a member of the Continuing Education Committee. She is the current treasurer for the Tau Beta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society. She received honorable mention as a Delaware Today's Top Nurse for Academic Educator. Nancy accepted ANA's Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ Challenge as an individual and hopes others will join too. Nancy Rubino can be reached at denurse73@yahoo.com

Healthy Nurses – Key to a Healthier Nation

As nurses we play significant roles in promoting the health of our patients. We teach strategies to eat healthy, exercise, and even relax. The question is, are we practicing what we teach? In May 2017 the American Nurses Association (ANA) Enterprise launched the Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ (HNHN) Grand Challenge. This nationwide initiative has the intent

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We are excited to announce that the Delaware Nurses Association's publication the DNA Reporter is going GREEN! The DNA Reporter will be distributed as part of a DNA membership benefit in both printed and electronic form. Beginning with the May 2020 issue, the publication will be available as an e-newsletter to any nurse licensed in Delaware who would like to receive it. If you are not a member of DNA, then this current issue will be your LAST printed copy of the DNA Reporter! If you want to continue to receive information from DNA, you have two options:

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to improve the health, safety, and wellness of nurses. If nurses are healthy then nurses can be role models, advocates, and educators leading individuals and groups to healthier life styles. The HNHN challenges nurses to look at their health in five key areas which are physical activity, sleep, nutrition, quality of life, and safety (The Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ Grand Challenge, 2019).

According to the research data from the Healthy Nurse, Health Nation™ health assessment survey, for nearly every indicator our health as nurses is worse than the average person. Forty-five percent reported never engaging in vigorous or strong exercise. Fourteen percent of respondents reported falling asleep or dozing off at inappropriate times which were usually a result of having difficulty sleeping. The Body Mass Index (BMI) of nurse respondents was 28.8 which are above the normal BMI of 18.5 to 24.9. In addition, only a small number of nurses indicated achieving a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Most felt the work place was safe and had safety policies, yet 51% experienced musculoskeletal pain at work. Stress was the highest health risk identified by 82% of the respondents. (The Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ Grand Challenge, *Research*, 2019). In comparison to all other occupations nurses rank fourth in rate of illness and injury that impact staying on the job (Bureau of Labor Statistics file:///F:/osh2_03302005.pdf).

We can't promote the health of our patients if we as nurses are not healthy. The Delaware Nurses Association partnered with the ANA on the Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ Challenge. This *DNA Reporter* will give you tips on how to be a healthier nurse. Jackie Levin, MS, RN, AHNN-BC, NC-BC provides insight on the importance of connecting with nature and natural environments to maintain our health. Then practice some stretches and techniques provided by Amy Holibuk, BA, BSN, RN and Joelle Sinclair, DPT, BS, BA, ATC, LAT, ITAT, ATRIC in their article titled Nurse: The workplace athlete and strategies to maintain musculoskeletal health in nurses. Anna Jenkins, BSN, BS, RN provides nutritional tips in the article titled The Impact of Shift Work and Long Hours on Nurses' Dietary Habits. Karen Avino, EdD, MSN, RN, AHN-BC, HWNC-BC shares about Mindfulness: A self-care strategy. In The Healthy Nurse, Eukeria Asamoah, BSN, RN shares how she learned to practice a healthy lifestyle as a new RN.

Are you ready to be a role model and be a healthy nurse? Then download the HNHN™ Action Plan at https://www.americannursetoday.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HNHN-Action-Plan-FORM.pdf **Join the Challenge!**

Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation™ Challenge Resources:

American Nurses Association's Health Appraisal Report (2016). Retrieved from https://www.nursingworld.org/~4aeeeb/globalassets/practiceandpolicy/work-environment/health--safety/ana-healthriskappraisalsummary_2013-2016.pdf

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EA &M

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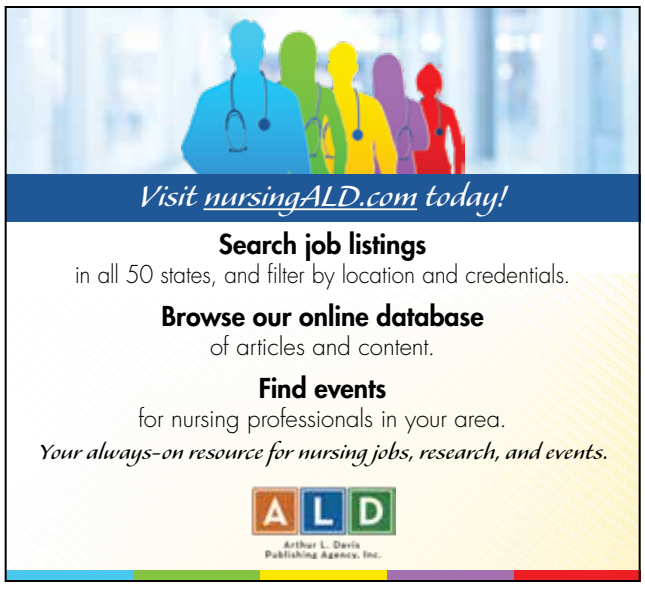

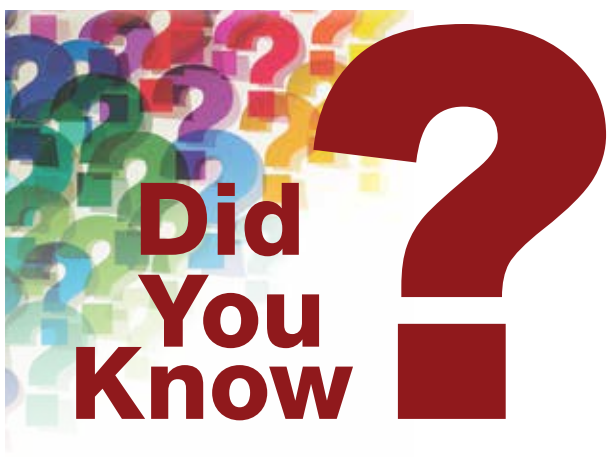

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DNA needs you! The Delaware Nurses Association works for the nursing profession as a whole in Delaware. Without the financial and volunteer support of our members, our work would not be possible. Even if you cannot give your time, your membership dollars work for you and your profession both at the state and national levels. The DNA works hard to bring the voice of nursing to Legislative Hall, advocate for the profession on regulatory committees, protect the nurse practice act, and provide educational programs that support your required continuing nursing education.

At the national level, the American Nurses Association lobbies, advocates and educates about the nursing profession to national legislators/regulators, supports continuing education and provides a unified nationwide network for the voice of nurses.

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The *DNA Reporter* welcomes unsolicited manuscripts by DNA members. Articles are submitted for the exclusive use of T*he DNA Reporter.* All submitted articles must be original, not having been published before, and not under consideration for publication elsewhere. Submissions will be acknowledged by e-mail or a self-addressed stamped envelope provided by the author. All articles require a cover letter requesting consideration for publication. Articles can be submitted electronically by e-mail to Sarah J. Carmody, MBA @ sarah@denurses.org.

Each article should be prefaced with the title, author(s) names, educational degrees, certification or other licenses, current position, and how the position or personal experiences relate to the topic of the article. Include affiliations. Manuscripts should not exceed five (5) typewritten pages and include APA format. Also include the author's mailing address, telephone number where messages may be left, and fax number. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to use any copyrighted material; in the case of an institution, permission must be obtained from the administrator in writing before publication. All articles will be peer-reviewed and edited as necessary for content, style, clarity, grammar and spelling. While student submissions are greatly sought and appreciated, no articles will be accepted for the sole purpose of fulfilling any course requirements. It is the policy of *DNA Reporter* not to provide monetary compensation for articles.

President's Message

Gary W. Alderson

By the time this reaches you we will already be into the new decade (2020's!); into the year designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the International Year of the Nurse; and into my second, and final, year as your president. So, first I want to wish for all of you and yours a happy, healthy, productive, and fulfilling 2020!

First, some bad news. For those of you who do not already know, our Executive Director, Sarah Carmody, has stepped down. Sarah decided to pursue a new challenge with Jefferson University in Philadelphia. Sarah has been an integral part of every facet of DNA for so long that it will be at least difficult – if not impossible – to replace her. The Executive Committee is working with Sarah to keep her on in a limited role until such time as we are able to function without her. Please join with me in wishing Sarah best wishes in her new endeavor and in offering her a hearty and heartfelt 'thanks' from all of us.

Coincidental to the work of the Executive Committee and Board to decide what we should do about support staff employees and / or independent contractors, is a larger discussion of exactly who we are and what we do. All of you will be receiving a personal letter in the (actual) mail from me, in which I explain this introspection.

As stated in the letter, DNA, like most volunteer organizations today, struggles with the perpetual issues of participation and sustainability. Recognizing that we all lead very busy lives - perhaps none more so than those of you at the bedside – DNA needs more of you to become active and participate to help us sustain the association. We especially need to hear from more of you who are easily forgotten; those of you who struggle every day out there on the front lines of health care and nursing practice. This is and always must be your organization and we must do all we can to support and nurture you. You may think your limited time commitment is not enough, but I assure you, we welcome – and need - everyone to participate at the level that works best for them so we can work better for you. We are all better together!

The letter goes on that for those of us who already are active in the association, there is always doubt about whether we are doing the things that the rest of the membership wants done; not to mention the doubt over why those nurses who do not belong to DNA have not yet joined. Last year the Board worked hard to clarify the goals and objectives of this association but as I said in the letter, I think it's time to revisit those; but only after soliciting the views of as many of you, the members, as possible.

So, instead of another online survey, I decided to reach out to each and every one of you personally. We really need to hear from as many of you as possible. For example, are we too focused on things that are of little or no interest to you? Or are we focused upon and doing things that you support and want us to continue? Or are we missing out completely on things that are important to you?

Please watch for the letter and respond. I hope that all of you will write, phone, email, or text me with your ideas regarding DNA. Some specifics from the letter are your thoughts on why so few Delaware nurses are DNA members and how we can improve that; and why you decided to join DNA and what the association is doing – or not doing – to perpetuate your interest and fulfill your expectations. I specifically asked that each of you rate, in order of importance, the core functions in which the association is currently engaged: advocacy and involvement at the state and local government level; presenting CE conferences twice a year; and approving CE provider units.

I hope to hear from as many of you as possible by the end of January so the Board has this input when it holds its next retreat in February or March. Again, I know we are all very busy, but please take a few moments to respond. Each and every one of you needs to be heard because you can make a difference in the success of DNA just by sharing your thoughts and ideas. I look forward to hearing from all of you!

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Jackie Levin

Jackie Levin earned her BSN from the University of Vermont and MS in Holistic Nursing from the College of New Rochelle, and a BA in Women Studies from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. She is a Nationally Board Certified Advance Practice Health and Wellness Nurse Coach and certified in Healing Circles, Ericksonian Hypnosis and Healing Touch. Jackie is the Executive Director of Leading Edge Nursing, a published author, public speaker, and patient advocate with more than 30 years of experience in healthcare. Through Leading Edge Nursing, Jackie's work is transforming healthcare organizations and cultures of stress into workplaces that generate health and wellbeing from the inside out. Jackie is a trained mindfulness instructor, a Nationally Board Certified Advanced Practice Holistic Nurse and Wellness/Leadership Coach, co-authored chapters in four editions of the textbook Holistic Nursing: A Handbook for Practice. Jackie authored two virtual and in-person programs, *Room to Breathe: Rewiring for Ease* the 7-lesson online mindfulness program for health professionals and *Medicine Walks and the Art of Transformative Inquiry* day-long retreat to reconnect with the heart and soul of our healthcare practice. Jackie can be reached by email at Jackie@LeadingEdgeNursing.com or at her office at (206) 304-7703.

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts" (Carson, 1956).

There are reasons people seek out nature when the stress of the world weighs heavy on their hearts. There are reasons people pick up stones and shells from a beach and set them on their desks or shelves or nurture potted plants to grow. Many people have pets and others walk to a local park or travel further into the wilderness, for joy and solace. Perhaps it is the vastness of nature and the recognition of an individual smallness that calls them to be befriended by the natural world. Or perhaps people find some sense of belonging—an essential component of life—from the way nature enfolds and entwines, without judgement or discrimination, all: the healthy, the sick and the dying.

Wilson (1984) called this magnetic pull for a close connection with other forms of life "biophilia." Neuroaesthetics scientist Nancy L. Etcoff (as cited in Pak & Reichsman, 2017) believed the draw and benefits of affiliating with nature's beauty is part of our evolutionary design. But does time in nature or natural environments actually have healing effects? Can time in nature have a beneficial impact on the practice of nursing and on how nurses show up as leaders and administrators? And how does someone gain this benefit amidst their busy lives and work schedules?

When the resource of time is limited

"…[Work] and life are not separate things and therefore cannot be balanced against each other except to create further trouble" (Whyte, 2009, p. 12).

Whyte (2009) proposed the pathway to wellbeing is the recognition there is an ongoing relationship and need for continuous dialogue among three major life commitments, also known as the three marriages: the commitments to work, to significant personal relationships, and to oneself. The third relationship, which requires time for introspection, care of one's body, and mental and physical rest, is specifically a difficult one to attain and then maintain, is why Whyte disposes of the idea of "work-life" balance—arguing balance is unachievable.

When the resource of time is limited, individuals must be good communicators among and between the three marriages. This is not advocation for *equality of time*, but an equity *of value and devotion* to achieve an integrated wholeness. In the same way the body's cells requires an intelligent cell membrane to maintain a healthy boundary for what it allows in and out of the cell—not for competition but for communication and the health of the whole body. One way to generate health and wellbeing is to take time in nature. The field of ecopsychology, the study of the mind, body, and spirit health benefits upon humans when they take time in nature or natural environments is rapidly growing, especially in response to the increased time spent inside and in front of electronic screens. Bratman, Hamilton, and Daily (2012) defined nature as areas that include a range of plants and nonhuman animals, landscapes such as gardens and parks to wildernesses and includes non-living elements like sunsets and large horizons as those found at the ocean or in the mountains.

Research

The good news is the benefits of time in nature and time with nature doesn't have to take someone far from home or days in the wilderness. In the Bratman, Daily, Levy, and Gross (2015) study, sixty participants were randomly assigned to either a 50-minute walk in a natural or an urban environment in and around Stanford, California. The nature walk group resulted in the following benefits: "decreased anxiety, rumination, and negative affect, and preservation of positive affect as well as cognitive benefits (increased working memory performance)" (Bratman et al., 2015, p. 41) when compared to the urban group.

Hunter, Gillespie, and Chen (2019) conducted an eight-week study on stress reduction as measured by salivary cortisol. The researchers allowed their 36 participants to "choose the time of day, duration and place of their Nature Experience (NE)" to match more of our ever-changing and unpredictable schedules. NE was defined "as spending time in an outdoor place that brings a sense of contact with nature, at least three times a week for duration of 10 minutes or more." (Hunter et al., 2019. p.722). The researchers found an NE of twenty and thirty minutes offered the most benefit to the study participants.

A six-week intervention comparing the effect of critical care nurses taking their breaks indoor only or in the hospital garden showed "significantly reduced emotional exhaustion and depersonalization" for the garden break-time group (Cordoza et al., 2018).

The systematic review by Byeongsang et al. (2017) on the practice of Shinrin-Yoku, Japanese for Forest Bathing, showed benefits for all ages, from the healthy young college student to the elderly with chronic illness on multiple systems: cardiac and pulmonary function, immune function, inflammation, oxidative stress, stress, anxiety, depression, and emotional response.

Indoor Nature Exposure

Because people spend so much time indoors, spaces that include naturescapes are growing in popularity and in recognition of their health benefits. DuBose et al. (2018) explained that according to the Samuelian Institute, qualities that enhance an indoor nature experience include:

> Spaces that evoke a sense of cohesion…and [have a] homelike environment, access to views and nature, light, noise control, barrier-free environments…[These] environments can induce physical and emotional responses such as happiness, joy, and relaxation…all of which are antecedents to healing. (p. 43)

How to bring nature into your three commitments

In developing a dialogue among your three commitments, think about the ways you already incorporate nature into your personal time, your relationships and at work, and identify ways you can amplify these. If you take walks by yourself, can you sometimes include your partner or a friend, or make a phone call to your family when you are taking a walk. If you tend to stay indoors during your work break, can you now include one or two times a week, a walk outside? Even in urban environments, many cities have created indoor and outdoor green spaces for public use. If you have a neighborhood park, make a relationship with just one tree. Visit it as if it were a relative and become familiar with the changes it makes throughout the seasons.

As in any wellness strategy, people have personal preferences and different access to nature environment. If you don't have much green space in your neighborhood or near your work, bringing in clippings of rosemary or peppermint, for color and refreshing scent, or even grow rosemary in a potted plant for your home or office space, can improve mood and a sense of wellbeing.

No matter what your role is in healthcare, there is stress, overwhelm, and frustration that impact your health and wellbeing, mood and digestive system, how well you fight off colds or how well you attend to the needs of staff, colleagues and administrators. Taking a tincture of nature can be one avenue to bring more vibrancy to your personal life, work life and relationship life.

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Nurse: The Workplace Athlete and Strategies to Maintain Musculoskeletal Health in Nurses.

Amy Holubik, BSN, RN and
Joelle Sinclair, DPT, BS, LAT, ATC, ITAT, ATRIC

Amy Holubik

Amy Holubik is currently practicing as a nurse in the home health setting for Nurse Family Partnership at Children and Families First. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from Salisbury University in 2009 and then went on to pursue her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Delaware State University in 2014. She previously gained experience in a federally qualified healthcare center and worked in the hospital setting on the medical surgical unit. Amy's passion to help improve the health of others extends into her training her dogs as part of the Delmarva Region of the National Capital Therapy Dogs to qualify as hospital therapy dogs for visitation. Amy may be reached via email at amy.holubik@cffde.org or directly at 302-932-4143.

Joelle Sinclair

Joelle Sinclair earned her Bachelor of Science degrees in Sports Medicine and Psychology at West Virginia Wesleyan College and went on to obtain her Doctorate in Physical Therapy with a Certificate in Health Service Administration at Creighton University. She is currently working for ATI Physical Therapy and provides patient care in both the clinical and outreach athletic training settings. Joelle has practiced in the healthcare rehabilitation setting for nearly two decades with a current emphasis on sports medicine, aquatic therapy, and chronic pain. Joelle may be reached via email at joelle.rubino@atipt.com or 302-677-0100.

The working nurse encounters many challenges within the workplace environment. It is key to identify the risks that can be controlled, and one of them is awareness of musculoskeletal health to prevent undue injury and lost time. Stress, occupational safety, prolonged periods of time on feet, and issues related to body mechanics can all be potential contributing factors in developing issues with overall musculoskeletal health (Ellapen & Narsigan, 2014; Rogers, Buckheit, & Ostendorf, 2013). According to a Health Risk Appraisal survey through the American Nurses Association (ANA), 82% of those surveyed over the course of a 12 month period rated workplace stress as the most significant potential harm to overall health. Nearly 53% recorded that a musculoskeletal condition was their main potential risk factor (Lowe & Dick, 2015; "Safe Patient Handling," 2013).

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) include any injury or disorder of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, or cartilage and can be related to an individual's work environment or performance ("Work Related," 2018). MSDs combine inflammation and pathological conditions that contribute to causes of clinical syndromes and may even lead to myalgia and other regional pain conditions (Qais, Nordin bin, & Aniza, 2017). Depending on an individual's work condition their musculoskeletal disorder can worsen or persist for an extended period of time ("Work Related," 2018). Nurses are exposed to heavy lifting during their hospital shifts which is a large contributor in combination with long hours, and stressful working conditions for developing musculoskeletal injuries and pain (Richardson, McNoe, Derrett, & Harcombe, 2018; "Safe Handling," 2013).

There is a global challenge to decrease the level of sedentary activity and decrease the cost to society. Working to increase overall physical activity and enhancing exercise are viewed as optimal ways to improve musculoskeletal health according to the Arthritis Research UK and Arthritis and World Health Organization (WHO) (Lewis et.al., 2019). Management of musculoskeletal diseases should start with proper and complete pain management, including accurate diagnosis and grading of pain (Austine, Nair, Mirza, 2016; Rogers et al., 2013).

Healthcare professionals, especially nurses, are ALL athletes in life who use their bodies like athletes every day. So, nurses should warm-up like athletes to prepare for work to improve overall performance and reduce risk of injury (Ellapen & Narsigan, 2018). A stretching and strengthening regime that targets the back, abdominal, and buttock muscles and promotes upright posture and strong back muscles will help to improve overall back health, flexibility, joint mobility, and postural awareness (Lewis et al., 2019; "Stretching and Strengthening," f2019;). Core exercises can aid in neck and back health ("Neck Pain," 2015; Rogers et al., 2013; Qais et al., 2017).

A study performed by Gartley and Prosser (2011) showed over a one year period that a stretching program had the potential to decrease musculoskeletal injury rates if done pre-shift. Several additional studies were found to show a variety of exercise and stretching programs to have a significant impact on lowering the prevalence of musculoskeletal pain (Lowe & Dick, 2015). Stretching is an exercise meant to improve range of motion, and flexibility. Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF), static, and isometric are the three most common types of stretches. Static stretching, a stretch held in a challenging but comfortable position for duration of time, is safe and effective for overall flexibility and ideal for jobs with brief breaks and lengthy time on the feet. A stretch and warmup program tailored to a specific sport activity is likely to yield the best outcome in relationship to injury prevention (Lewis 2014; Qais et al., 2017). Finding the right mixture will keep a nurse moving, more flexible, and feeling less overall stress (Goetzel, Henke, & Tabrizi, 2014).

Keys to a good program:

- Perform stretches slowly and with lower intensity when beginning a new program until your body gets used to the exercises. (Lewis et al., 2019).
- Keep breathing at a normal rate before, during, and after each stretch. BREATHE! Avoid holding your breath.
- No ballistic stretching! Perform a static stretch. Remember, gently pull on muscles and hold, do not bounce the stretch.
- Stretches should feel good and never hurt. Avoid pain during a stretch, move to a point where you feel only a gentle pull.
- Stretch regularly while on shift and throughout the course of your day.

Minutes a day of stretching can keep one working longer, under less overall physical pain, and prevent some of the risks that can lead to greater issues with the musculoskeletal system (Ellapen & Narsigan, 2018; Qais et al., 2017). Tackling musculoskeletal conditions and their wider impacts on health and wellbeing is a crucial step in keeping the nurse on the "field."

Start practicing some of these stretches.

9 WORKPLACE STRETCHES FOR NURSES

Stretching daily will help keep you flexible and decrease stress.

PERFORM EACH STRETCH 1-2 times daily. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Complete 3 repetitions.

Figure 1 Upper Trapezius Stretch:
with the head forward tilt the head to the left and hold; Return to center and then repeat on the right side.

Figure 2 Tree Hug
While sitting upright extend both arms out in front of you with the fingers interlaced, reach forward as if to reach around a large tree.

Figure 3 Hamstring Stretch (Seated)
With one leg positioned straight out in front, Reach forward to try and touch the toes. Avoid letting the knee bend.

Figure 4 Wrist flexion and Extension Stretches
Keep the arm straight, but not locked at the elbow. First pull hand/wrist back towards the body. Then push the wrist/hand down. Make sure to grab at the palm area and not pull back only along the fingers.

Musculoskeletal Health continued on page 9

The Impact of Shift Work and Long Hours on Nurses' Dietary Habits

Anna E. Jenkins, BSN, BS, RN

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Anna E. Jenkins earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Wesley College, and has a second Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from the University of Delaware. She recently completed the Critical Care Nurse Residency Program at Christiana Care Health System in January 2019, and accepted a position on the Medical Intensive Care Unit where she cares for acute and chronic ventilator patients. Anna is an active member on the Central Line Associated Bloodstream Infection Team, where she collaborates with other co-workers on strategies to prevent central line infections and maintain the safety of critically ill patients. Anna looks forward to continuing her career and education as a critical care nurse, and is eager to start studying for her CCRN exam. Anna can be reached by email at aejenk1115@gmail.com

The greatest achievement for a new graduate of nursing school is finding out they passed the NCLEX. After all of the long nights studying and long clinical hours during nursing school, they are officially a Registered Nurse. Now, they will begin their journey in the most trusted and most rewarding profession. However, all of the hard work they are about to endure is going to mean less if they are not putting their health first. Although as a new nurse, they may find days where their head feels like it is spinning due to a busy patient assignment, it is extremely important that they pay attention to their bodies and to choose the right foods to fuel it.

Due to long working hours, shift work, and an increase in acuity of patients, nurses are finding it difficult to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle inside and outside of the work environment. According to Nicholls, Perry, Duffield, Gallagher, and Pierce (2016), obesity and an increase in body mass index (BMI) are linked to the number of years worked as a nurse, as well as working primarily night shifts. One key explanation for this correlation is that "fatigue from working long hours and shift work may lead to reliance on high energy snack or convenience foods" (Nicholls et al., 2016, p. 1053). Night shift nurses also have a reduced intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, and have an increased intake of processed foods that are high in sugar and fats, which can adversely affect metabolism (Nicholls et al., 2016). This correlation can be attributed to irregular meal times, as well as an irregular sleep schedule.

Furthermore, nurses attributed an increase in weight to "emotional eating" when stressed at work, or outside of the work environment. According to Nicholls et al. (2016), nurses are more likely to use food as a coping strategy, and are more likely to have a higher intake of processed foods perceived stress levels are increased. It is also difficult to refrain from eating unprocessed foods while at work because former patients, or patients' family members, will often bring in foods such as cookies, cakes, and fried foods as a "thank you" for taking care of them or their loved ones. Nurses will also often have "potlucks" for social gatherings while at work, which more than likely consist of "comfort foods" that are high in fat, salt, sugar, and processed carbohydrates.

On the other hand, nurses attributed working long hours, not eating at regular meal times, and an increase in coffee and high calorie foods during their shift as a correlation to an increase in weight and BMI (Nicholls et al., 2016). Unfavorable work schedules, such as working twelve-hour shifts, working overtime, or being on-call, contributed to nurses feeling like they had less restful sleep in-between shifts. Nurses also attributed their poor dietary habits to "limited access to healthy food" in the hospital's cafeteria (Nicholls et al., 2016). The literature also pointed out that there is a correlation between the lack of sleep and extreme fatigue that directly affected nurses' motivation to prepare meals at home, but also caused an increase in their consumption of high fat foods, sugary beverages, alcohol, and caffeine (Nicholls et al., 2016).

For most nurses, caffeine is a staple in their diet, and plays a major role in surviving working three twelve-hour shifts in a row. While it is acceptable to consume caffeine in moderation, many nurses experience extreme fatigue that may require them to increase their caffeine consumption that may result in adverse effects. Coffee and other caffeine products are used to increase alertness, combat fatigue, and enhance physical activity. Moderate caffeine intake is compared to drinking four to five cups of coffee a day, which has about 95mg of caffeine per cup. According to Carreon and Parsh (2019), benefits of a healthy caffeine intake can play a role in preventing type 2 diabetes, reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, and promote healthy lung function in patients with chronic pulmonary diseases. While caffeine in moderation can be beneficial to one's health and endurance during long working hours, it is important to avoid overconsumption of caffeine during a twenty four hour period. Overconsumption of coffee and other caffeine products can cause dehydration by acting as a diuretic and promoting the excretion of water, sodium, and potassium levels. Dehydration can lead to headaches, fatigue, and gastrointestinal discomfort, such as vomiting or diarrhea (Carreon & Parsh, 2019). Increased caffeine intake can also cause mood changes such as anxiety, stress, or anger. Nurses must remember it is critical to maintain adequate intake of water throughout their shift so they can provide the best care to their patients. A good habit to make is keeping a water bottle in a cabinet near the nurse's station, and trying to drink at least eight ounces of water each hour.

Throughout the course of their career, nurses will undergo enormous amounts of stress. Whether it is caring for a critically ill patient who is rapidly declining, comforting the family of a patient who is dying, or enduring verbal and/or physical abuse from a difficult patient or family member, the amount of stress a nurse can undergo during each shift can have a negative impact on his or her physical health and mental health. In order to combat the negative effects of stress, such as gastrointestinal distress, fatigue, malaise, depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbances, research suggested incorporating a daily prebiotic and probiotic has been shown to decrease the effects of stress (Ferranti, Dunbar, Dunlap, & Corwin, 2014). Probiotics, such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, are found in fermented foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, soft cheeses, and apple cider vinegar.

Probiotics play a key role in digestion by "harvesting energy from food, balancing the good and bad bacteria in the gut, and manufacturing neurotransmitters such as serotonin, enzymes, and vitamins" (Ferranti et al., 2014, p. 480). They also are shown to increase immune function, and metabolic functions such as weight management. Serotonin, known as the "feel good hormone," is increased when incorporating a probiotic into a healthy diet, which can decrease the occurrence of mood changes such as depression and anxiety (Ferranti et al., 2014). Since nurses undergo stress on a daily basis while at work, taking a daily probiotic can be beneficial in combating irritable bowel symptoms, fatigue from shift work, and increase immune function while caring for patients who may have influenza viruses or common colds.

Although a new nurse may need to find an eating schedule that works best for their body, a good rule of thumb is to have three large meals a day with two snacks in between. A meal should consist of a complete protein such as lean meats, beans, or eggs, as well as a vegetable and a whole grain (Greenwald, 2015). Limit the intake of processed meats that are high in nitrates, such as hot dogs, bacon, and sausage, and incorporate foods that are high in fiber and protein such as sweet potatoes, brown rice, or nuts (Greenwald, 2015). Avoiding processed foods will also reduce the risk of colon cancer and cardiovascular disease. It is also important for a new nurse to take advantage of their days off from work and prepare meals at home to save money, consume meals at regular intervals, and maintain good sleep hygiene (Nicholls et al., 2016).

An example of a suggested meal plan for nurses on the job would be to have a breakfast high in soluble and insoluble fiber, such as whole grain oatmeal or cereal with skim milk and blueberries. Choosing a breakfast that is high in fiber will increase satiety, and provide lasting energy throughout the morning. For lunch and dinner, it is best to choose a source of lean protein and pair it with a leafy green vegetable and whole grain. An example would be having baked chicken, ground turkey, or tofu with brussel sprouts and brown rice. Along with eating three large meals a day, it is important to eat two snacks throughout the day as well to help one stay focused and satisfied while on the job. As stated in Greenwald (2015), a minimum of two and a half cups of fruit and vegetables should be consumed in a day. An example of healthy snacks would be having an apple with peanut butter, or carrots and hummus. Incorporating a daily probiotic and consuming at least sixty-four ounces of water a day has also been shown to combat fatigue, gastrointestinal distress, and mood changes when paired with a healthy diet and exercise regimen.

As stated earlier, being a nurse is the most rewarding career and one of the most trusted professions in the country. However, it is imperative for new nurses to pay attention to their bodies, and consume the necessary nutrients to have a lasting impact on health. It is important to make new nurses aware of how shift work and working long hours can affect their body, and how small dietary changes can have a lasting impact on their health.

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Mindfulness - A Self-Care Strategy

Karen Avino, EdD, RN, MSN, AHN-BC, HWNC-BC

Karen Avino

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Mindfulness is no longer an uncommon term. It is often heard in daily language as well as in research reports identifying the benefits of mindfulness. Mindfulness is suggested as a self-care practice as well as a treatment method for conditions. The overarching benefit of mindfulness is the ability to learn to live in the present moment without continued worry about the past or the future which can help to decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety. While Mindfulness practices originated from Buddhist traditions, Jon Kabat- Zinn was influential in creating awareness of the use in healthcare by researching the benefits of mindfulness in patients with pain and demonstrated significant improvements in pain levels, mood, and psychiatric symptoms (Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985; Kabat-Zinn, 1994). This prompted other studies to examine the effect on variety of diseases, the effect on stress levels, and the immune function (Goyal et al., 2014; Kabat-Zinn et al., 1985). The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health webpage discusses the positive effects mediation that it can have in many other conditions such as hypertension, irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, and anxiety (see https://nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm#hed3).

Mindfulness has also been found useful as a complementary treatment for people with opioid use disorder and chronic pain in methadone maintenance therapy (Robinson, Mathews, & Witek-Janusek, 2003). In fact, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has implemented a *Whole Health for Life* person centered approach to care and advocates for the use of mindfulness for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Garland et al., 2019; Hempe, 2014) (See https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/Veteran-handouts/Introduction_to_Mindful_Awareness.asp).

Currently, mindfulness is a recommended practice for everyone including older adults (King et al., 2013). Today's busy world with technology overload does not allow for downtime or body homeostasis adjustments to rebalance. Nurses live in a state of heightened chronic stress levels. It is well known that the nursing profession is a stressful career.

Implementing mindful self-care strategies by organizations employing nurses will benefit by reduced attrition of nurses and improved quality of care. The American Nurses Foundation suggested Five Simple Ways to Feel and be Better; 1) Stop, take a Breath and Observe, 2) Do a Body Scan, 3) Breathe, 4) Stretch, and 5) Eat and Drink Often (Geiger et al., 2016). These are all the tenets of Mindfulness. Mindfulness enhances areas of the brain that are responsible for attention and executive function and modulates the amygdala or emotional brain, which improves focused attention, develops intention skills for actions taken, and decreases reactivity without reflection that leads to decreased judgement and improved acceptance of differences. Therefore, mindfulness improves communication abilities that lead to improved patient outcomes, patient satisfaction, and nurse satisfaction. Increasing around the country, Healing Circle programs are being offered by holistic nurses to nurses in healthcare settings. The program develops a community of peer to peer support and an opportunity to practice mindful skills in a safe environment. The American Holistic Nurse Association provides mindfulness tools and information entitled Holistic Stress Management Is Based on Self-Reflection and Self-Care (see https://www.ahna.org/Home/Resources/Stress-Management).

Mindful Practices

Mindfulness practices are about increasing awareness of bodily sensations, especially the breath, and using mindful movement practices to increase the awareness of connection. There are many types of meditations each with a different twist on the technique including: Buddhist, Hindu, Chinese, Christian, Sufi, and the common practice of guided mediations. Some techniques are relaxing, some create awareness, and some claim deeper transformation and/or spiritual development. Experimenting with a variety to find the one that works best for your unique needs and personality is best. The idea is to practice on a daily basis so you can call on it in times of need. Once you have become comfortable with this daily practice, the techniques can then be applied to patient care.

In Integrative Nurse Coaching, using awareness practice techniques in practice provides a time for reflection and help for patients to reach their inner wisdom to come up with solutions or answers on their own. This awareness creates an openness to new possibilities and motivation or engagement to aspects of the experience, without judgement or attachment. There are a variety of guided awareness scenarios that can be used for particular situations in patient care based on the need. These are learned through the self-development process and practice of Integrative Nurse Coaching.

The Basic Technique

- The goal is that awareness of thoughts, feelings, emotions, sounds, and smells are acknowledged but then *let go* as your awareness is returned to the breath in the center of the chest. These techniques require continued practice in letting go.
- Most techniques suggest starting in a seated comfortable position to maintain awareness. The point is not to fall asleep during the experience. Your eyes can be closed or have a downward gaze.
- As you move your awareness to the center of your chest, experience the **centering** as the breath enters and exits. As thoughts or sounds enter your mind or awareness, **acknowledge** without judging, **let go**, and **return** your awareness to the breath in the center of your chest. Continue this centering, acknowledging, let go, and return as many times as needed in the timeframe you are practicing.
- It is not uncommon to hear "this doesn't work for me." Awareness practices are a learned experience, the more you practice, the easier is the return, and the outcome of living life with awareness of the present moment, feeling balanced with increased clarity is gratifying. Find what time of day, or length of time works for you. Most use a 10-15 minute timeframe daily for practice. The following are quality websites that provide free access to guided mediations for self-care and patient use.

Quality Free Mindful Practice Websites

- Mindful.org
- https://www.mindful.org/audio-resources-for-mindfulness-meditation/
- UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/body.cfm?id=22&iirf_redirect=1
- UC San Diego Center for Mindfulness https://medschool.ucsd.edu/som/fmph/research/mindfulness/programs/mindfulness-programs/MBSR-programs/Pages/audio.aspx
- The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/recordings
- Insight Meditation Society, Inc. https://www.dharma.org/resources/audio/#guided

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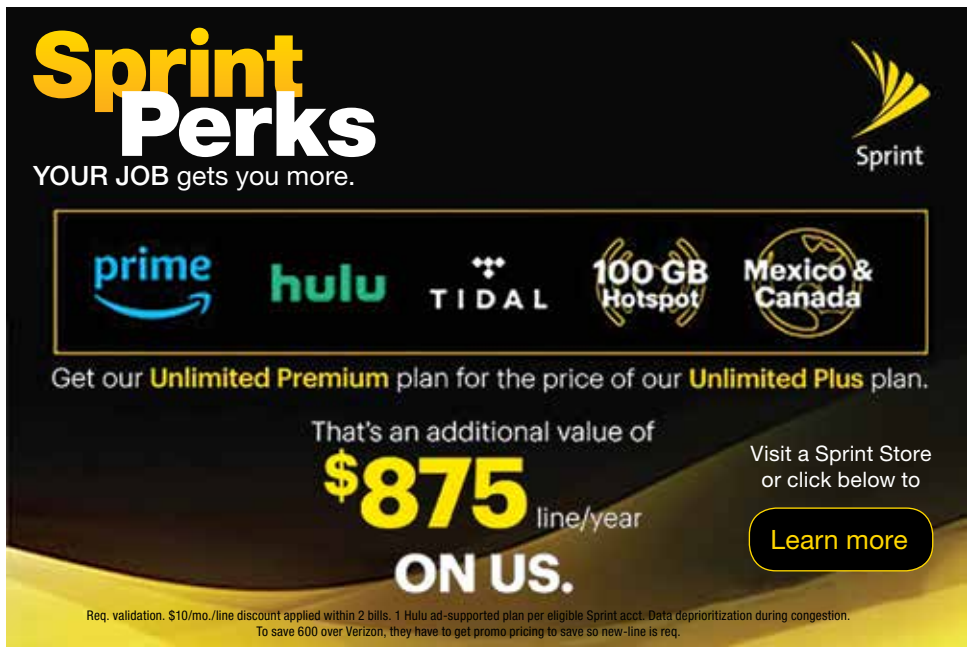

The Healthy Nurse: Perspectives from a New RN

Eukeria Asamoah, BSN, RN

Eukeria Asamoah

Eukeria R. Asamoah earned her BSN from Wesley College. She began her nursing career as a Nursing Assistant at a local nursing home in Pittsfield, MA. While in nursing school, Eukeria worked as a Student Nurse Extern at Christiana Care Health Systems in Newark, DE. During summer breaks she worked as a Direct Care Tech at Guidewire Inc., in Pittsfield, MA., providing services to adults with behavioral disabilities and other psychiatric conditions. After graduating with her BSN in May of 2018, she began working as a Float Nurse at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, MA. Eukeria held that position for a year and decided to continue her education. Currently, she is a student in the Psych/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program at Fairleigh Dickinson University. She currently works as a full-time Oncology Nurse for the Cancer Institute of New Jersey at University Hospital. Eukeria can be reached by email at Eukeriaasamoah@gmail.com

Despite unpopular belief, working as a night shift nurse is a great way to start a nursing career. As a recent graduate, staying up overnight is nothing new; whether the reason being is studying with friends for an upcoming test or even hanging out with peers until the break of dawn for the college experience. Although the familiarity of staying awake in wee hours of the night was common, as a new registered nurse (RN), I was rather unprepared of the toll lack of sleep took on my health especially doing it on a day to day basis. According to the Institute of Medicine (2006), studies reported that sleep loss (less than seven hours per night) may have wide-ranging effects on various body systems, affecting mood, eating habits, and substance abuse.

My first job as a Registered Nurse (RN) was a night float nurse position. I was thrilled to begin my lifelong journey as a nurse, and I could have cared less about the shift I worked. My great anticipation and excitement were quickly rattled when I realized I had to make serious adjustments to my personal life and daily routine. The first few months of working I had gained a noticeable amount of weight, I slept most of my days away, and had few interactions with close friends and family members. I quickly established that if I was going to enjoy my personal life as well as my career, a few adjustments to my lifestyle were necessary to achieve a better balance between work and leisure.

First and foremost to maintaining my health as a new nurse was getting an adequate amount of sleep. It is quite difficult for night shift nurses to get enough sleep when it's broad daylight. The National Sleep Foundation (n.d.) stated that "shift work sleep disorder is a circadian rhythm sleep disorder. It is considered a disorder because of the frequency with which people suffer from sleep disturbance and excessive sleepiness in trying to adapt to a shift work schedule" (p.1). To meet my sleep need, I invested in room darkening bedroom curtains, an eye mask, and even warned family members not to awaken. I needed to adjust to sleeping from the morning when I got out of work into the afternoon as if that was my "normal" night of sleep. Vitale, Varrone-Garnesh, and Vu (2015), pointed out that it is important to wake up around the same time each day, including days off, and to keep sleep debt to a minimum. Adhering to this practice, I had enough energy for the night to work and also to accomplish things I wanted to do after my sleep.

Research depicted that "night duty can negatively impact personal/family life. Strong implications for self-care and in areas of family care exist" (Vitale et al., 2015, p.3). To maintain overall health, I participate in various activities to enrich my physical and mental well-being. Activities such as hot yoga, going to the gym, and attending pottery classes became a regular part of my routine. Engaging in such activities, I was able to stay healthy and also discover new hobbies. I found new constructive ways to get busy or make sure I had things to do outside of work. On my long days off, traveling became a great way to discover new places as well as providing a rejuvenating mindset for my return to work.

Of course, I cannot describe ways of maintaining a healthy lifestyle as a new nurse without mentioning my diet. My usual diet is not one to lose weight; however, I observed some weight loss once I became aware of my eating habits. It is so easy to eat what and however when working nightshift. Maddox (2017) discussed the following statistics between night shift workers and obesity:

> Research shows night shift workers may increase the chance of being overweight or obese by nearly 40% or even more and that some studies have found night workers are 1.3 times more likely to be overweight or obese than day workers. (p.4)

It's difficult at times to resist the urges of eating calorie-dense foods that provide quick energy boosts such as sugary drinks, cookies, muffins, etc. During my shifts, I now opt for healthier snacks such as dried fruits, nuts and raw cuts of vegetables.

Moreover, though most of my co-workers reached to caffeine during the night for alertness, I have never been one to drink coffee or other caffeinated drinks. Hydration is a key aspect when maintaining a healthy diet. For me to accomplish this, I eliminated sugary drinks and replaced them with water and natural fruit juices.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle as a new graduate RN was challenging at first. However, once I got into a good routine of balancing work and personal life, my health improved. Finding a solid plan on how I wanted to live my life as well as the things I wanted to accomplish made it an easy transition. Through personal dedication and commitment, I was able to benefit from this new experience and fresh approach into the nursing practice.

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Musculoskeletal Health continued from page 5

Figure 5 Cross body stretch
Start by taking the right arm and bringing it across the chest. Then bring left arm up just above the elbow and apply pressure to pull the shoulder forward.
Repeat on the opposite side.

Figure 6 Low back stretch
Position legs with 90 degree bend at the knees and hips. Lean forward crossing the arms and trying to grab an invisible bar that comes out of the ankle bones.

Figure 7 Standing quadriceps stretch
Keeping the knee positioned under the hip, pull up at the ankle. You should feel a pull along the front of your thigh.

Figure 8 Calf stretch
Standing at wall put the toes on the wall and lean body weight into foot stretching the back of the lower leg.

The above are provided as an example of stretches that may be performed to help with flexibility, muscle pain and tightness, and stress. Please consult your licensed health care provider if you have any questions regarding the stretches and any limitations prior to attempting the stretches. Created Joelle Sinclair 9/19.

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Mailing Address Line 2	Phone Number ☐ Home ☐ Work
City/State/Zip	Email Address

Professional Information

Employer	Current Position Title: (ie: staff nurse)
Type of Work Setting: (ie: LTC, Ambulatory Center)	What is your primary role in nursing? ☐ Administrator/supervisor staff ☐ Discharge planner/case manager ☐ Educator ☐ Office nurse ☐ Researcher/consultant ☐ Quality assurance/infectious control ☐ Staff nurse ☐ Not currently working in nursing ☐ Other nursing position
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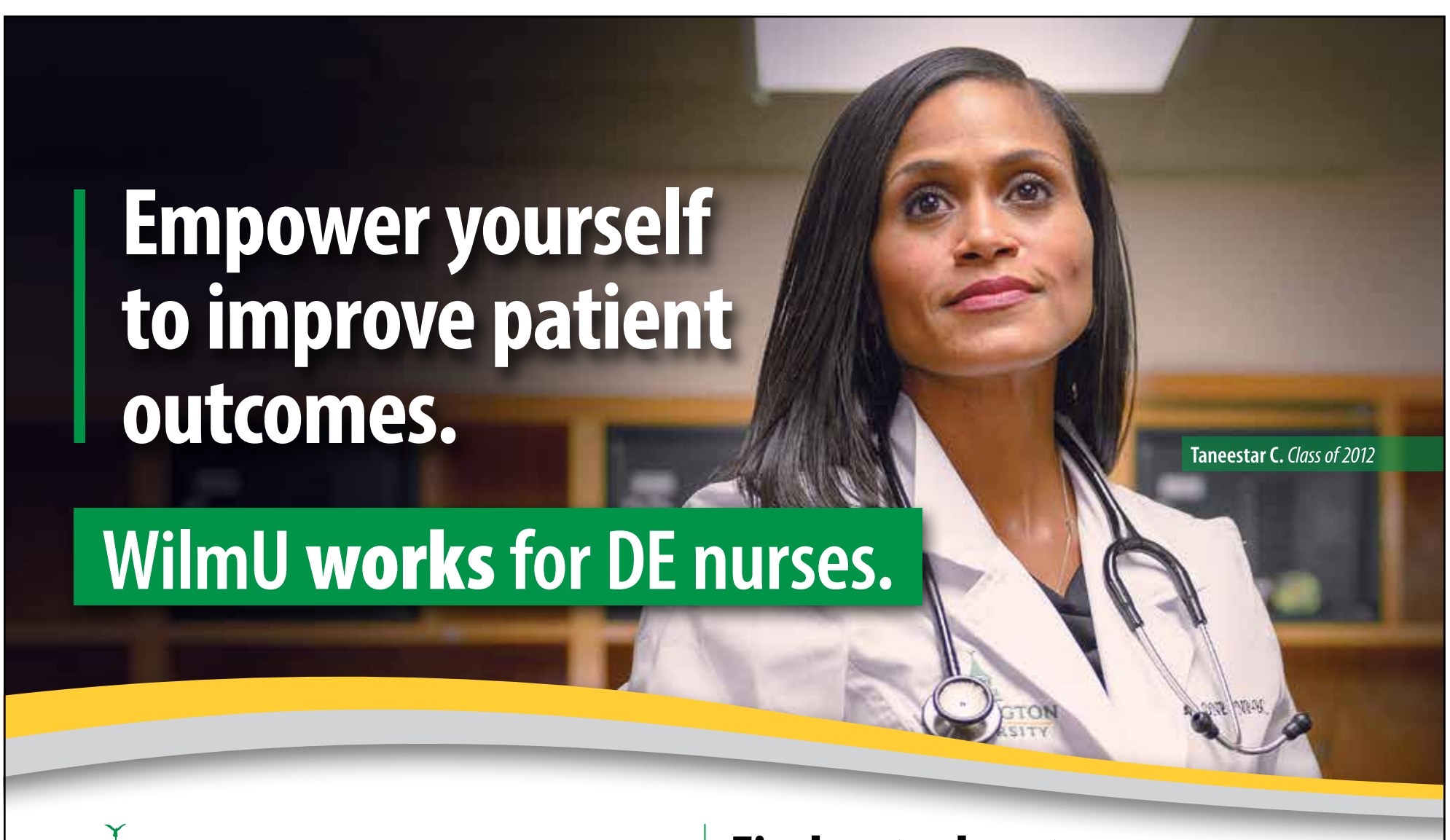

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