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President’s Letter

Ruth Elsa Baldwin RN, VSNA President

PLEASE ENVISION ALL THE GREAT CHALLENGES

Thanks to all the members of VSNA for helping us to address the issues currently facing the nursing profession. Just a few of these issues are listed below:

1. The Future of Nursing:
   • The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recently published their report on the “Future of Nursing” in which they issued a call for nursing professionals to play a greater role in the healthcare system. Thanks to June Benoit, Sigma Theta Tau & Mary Val Palumbo for speaking on the future of nursing. This report has inspired the theme for the VSNA Convention 2011.

2. Government Affairs
   • Thanks to Christy Steier and Margaret Luce for planning a day at the capitol in April 2011. See you there.

3. Supporting LPNs
   • Websites of PA & NJ exemplify ways in which we can continue to encourage and embrace a positive change.

4. Continuing Education and Programs
   • Committee on Education and Lorraine Welch, Vermont State Nurses Foundation working diligently on applications and programs.

5. Building a strong next generation of nursing professionals
   • Student involvement as committee members and in legislative activity and mentor programs.

6. Recognizing & Celebrating the Vermont State Board of Nursing’s 100th Anniversary

7. Vermont State Nurses’ Association 100 year anniversary in 2014.
   • We are planning a historical project.

8. Communications
   • All Districts for keeping member involvement up to date on current issues.

9. Unification on Standards of Care
   • Thanks to ANA and State Boards of Nursing for creating policies and establishing standards of care across the United States. This work will lead to more cohesiveness among all states and allow ANA to become a more powerful advocate for the nursing profession.

Thanks for helping create change and advance the nursing profession by fostering high standards of practice, promoting rights of nursing practice, promoting rights of nurses in the work place, projecting positive change and realistic views of nursing, and lobbying on healthcare issues affecting nurses and the public.

President’s Letter

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Ruth Elsa Baldwin
The VSNA wants you to take advantage of some of the networking and informational resources available on the Internet. Current information about activities of the VSNA can be found by visiting the VSNA Website at: http://my.memberclicks.com/vsna or http://www.vsna-inc.org

Requests for additions or changes to the VSNA website should be communicated before the 1st of each month to the site’s webmaster at vtnurse@sover.net.

Also, as a VSNA member you are welcome to join the VSNA listserv. To become a listserv participant, send an e-mail message to the VSNA office at vtnurse@sover.net. In your message, please indicate that you wish to be part of the listserv and include your name, e-mail address, and your VSNA member number.

Hope to see you on the web!

Deadlines for the Vermont Nurse Connection

Are you interested in contributing an article to an upcoming issue of the Vermont Nurse Connection? If so, here is a list of submission deadlines for the next 2 issues:

Vol. 14 #3—April 25, 2011
Vol. 14 #4—July 25, 2011

Articles may be sent to the editors of the Vermont Nurse Connection at:
Vermont State Nurses’ Association
Attention: VNC
100 Dorset Street, Suite 13
South Burlington, VT 05403-6241

Articles may also be submitted electronically to vtnurse@sover.net.

If you wish to submit a “Letter to the Editor,” please address it to:
Vermont State Nurses’ Association
Attn: Vermont Nurse Connection
100 Dorset Street, #13
South Burlington, VT 05403

Please remember to include contact information, as letter authors may need to be contacted by the editors of the VNC for clarification. NOTE: Letters to the Editor reflect the opinions of the letter authors and should not be assumed to reflect the opinions of the Vermont State Nurses’ Association.

Jean Graham, Editor
An exciting movement is occurring in Vermont in response to the Institute of Medicine’s Report: The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health. Nurse leaders from principal professional and institutional organizations from across the state gathered together to learn more about the Report and begin generating ideas and action plans. The strategy is to plan a concerted effort to lead the changes necessary to take nursing and Vermont health care into the future.

On January 27, 2011, nurses from Fletcher Allen Health Care, Kappa Tau, University of Vermont, Vermont Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals, Vermont Nurse Practitioner Association, Vermont Organization of Nurse Leaders, and Vermont State Nurses Association met at the University of Vermont for the Kick Off meeting. Mary Val Palumbo DNP, presented the contents of the report and specific recommendations for the four key target areas:

- Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
- Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
- Nurses should be full partners, with physicians and other health professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States.
- Effective workforce planning and policymaking require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

The remaining time was spent brainstorming ideas each organization could achieve. A few examples included:

- Improve access to BSN and graduate programs, online and hybrid educational offerings;
- Work with legislature;
- Ongoing dialogue among nurse leaders;
- Consider re-establishing the Blue Ribbon Commission;
- VSN Convention 2011—Theme—Future of Nursing, and
- Publish evidence and research demonstrating the value of nurses.

The next steps will be to meet again and formulate an organized cohesive plan where each nursing organization and institution will have specific recommendations to carry out. Why is this so important? The timing is right with the advent of the Affordable Care Act and now, in our own state, discussion of a single payer model, the Report offers an incredible opportunity for nurses to step up to the plate. Who better than nurses to lead this critical cultural transformation in health care; Nurses are, after all, the largest health care workforce, who spends the most time with and understands the needs of patients and their families, and who have demonstrated high quality patient care. As nurses we have a moral imperative to assure our profession is ready and responsive to help create the most efficient, cost effective and quality health care system possible for Vermonters.

Please join us in the very important mission. What can you do? First of all, inform yourself about this document by going to www.nursingworld.org or for the full report go to http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12956. You can also go to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing website www.TheFutureofNursing.org. Next pick a personal goal that aligns with the Report’s recommendations and get involved, work with your own professional organizations or work place institutions. Engage in the upcoming and ongoing discussions, pick a specific goal and action plan to conduct at your work place organization and finally talk with your fellow nurses about the Report to stir excitement and motivation about our important professional opportunity. The time is now and the time is right.

Ann Laramee APRN
Kappa Tau President
Is your organization currently in the midst of making changes? Are you looking for ideas to improve your processes while increasing employee satisfaction and retention? If you are ready to discover new ways to maximize your organization's productivity and efficiency, then all you need to do is ask the right questions. Appreciative Inquiry allows you to do just that.

So what is Appreciative Inquiry? It's a verbal science that's been around since the 1980's, that shows us how to ask questions in a way that will elicit positive responses. By using this model you can gain a fresh new perspective and spur positive change within your organization. The reality is that wonderful things can begin to happen when you stop focusing on the negative and start focusing on the positive.

Why is this new method of gathering information effective? Because, it's different than how we've done things in the past. Because most people think thoughts that are 70-90 percent negative or of no use to them, it's very easy to understand why we tend to ask questions that focus on what's wrong, rather than asking questions that focus on what's right.

We ask "who made the mistake," rather than asking, "What options do we have to fix things?" We ask "who can be blamed for this," rather than asking "what did we learn from this?" Or, we ask, "what's wrong with this picture," rather than asking, "What am I doing right?" In short, in the past we had a "what was I thinking," or "what were they thinking," mentality.

So who invented Appreciative Inquiry? Two professors, David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva, at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. To date, hundreds of people have been involved in co-creating new concepts and practices for applying the spirit and methodology of Appreciative Inquiry into organizations all over the world.

The Appreciative Inquiry Process consists of a 4-D cycle: Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny.

By using these four steps, you too can begin to use this positive process to grow your organization.

Discover: The first step in the Appreciative Inquiry cycle focuses on identifying "what is." To uncover the current situation, you will begin by asking carefully constructed positive-focused questions. Here, among other things, your goal is to discover what drives success, contributes to employee satisfaction, and helps maximize productivity. The purpose of the questions asked during this stage in the process is to discover how the organization is most alive and successful. The goal here is to create an open-dialogue where information flows freely. Here is a sample of questions designed to help you elicit positive responses during the discovery stage:

• Share a time with me where you felt the happiest/most successful at your job?
• What first attracted you to this job?
• Tell me about a time when someone has recently helped you succeed at a task?
• What makes your work meaningful?
• What do you find most exciting about your position?
• If I asked your friends to share with me three of your best qualities, what would they say?
• Where do you gain your inspiration?
• If you were the manager of the organization, in what area would you focus more of your time?
• What is most pleasing to you?
• What do you feel confident about?
• Tell me about a time where you felt reassured?
• What three things have you liked most about your time here thus far?
• What do you value most about the nature of your work?
• Tell me about a time where you felt your organization was most connected to its patients?
• What do you think draws people to work here?
• If you could talk to the President of the organization, what is the one thing he/she could do to make your job better, faster, or more enjoyable?

Dream: After identifying the current situation or “what is,” the next step in the Appreciative Inquiry process allows you to focus on “what might be.” Here are some positive-focused questions that will help you to navigate this stage:

• Imagine and tell me what your perfect shift would look like?
• What are your deepest desires for the organization?
• If you could wave a magic wand and have exactly what you desire, what would that be?
• If a genie granted you three wishes pertaining to your job or organization, what would you ask for?
• If you could fast-forward three to five years into the future and imagine that your highest hopes and dreams for your organization have become a reality, how does the organization look? How is your work or day different?
• What are some of the ways that you’re interacting with others in the organization that are working for you?

During the Dream step, the possibilities are endless. Give yourself and members of your organization the gift of no boundaries in order to dream your biggest dreams.

Design: Once you’ve discovered strengths and possibilities in the last two stages, you’ll want to find ways to achieve these dreams. So now that you’ve discovered “what might be,” your job in the Design phase is to discover “how can it be.” Here, you’ll generate “possibility statements,” also termed “provocative propositions.” Possibility statements are designed to stretch the status quo, be grounded in the organization’s history, and, most importantly, these statements focus on the desired future. The result of this stage is that you will have a series of paragraphs that outline how the Dream will be realized. The big question to ask at this stage is “how can we go about achieving what we envisioned in the Dream phase?”

Destiny: Now, that you have generated a list of possibility statements, its time to make your dreams a reality. This step focuses on “what will be.” At this point in the process, you will choose what you will move forward with. You will begin to incorporate the possibility statements with your job, your team, and your organization. Here you’ll find ways to apply overall Appreciative Inquiry process to your overall culture. Destiny is not an end to the process, but the beginning to a whole new way of doing business.

Appreciative Inquiry just makes sense when you stop to think about it. People tend to gravitate in the direction in which they are focused on the most. Therefore when you focus on the negative, your problems will just get bigger and more overwhelming. However, by giving yourself and your organization the gift of Appreciative Inquiry, you will focus on the positive and begin to be awed by the differences it can make. Remember, small changes to questions you may already be asking or small changes to your current outlook will help you ignite positive change.

Dr. Susanne Gaddis, PhD, known as The Communications Doctor, is an international professional speaker, communications consultant, and executive coach, Workshop leader, Cara Williams, M.A., offers courses in appreciative inquiry, positive organizational development and emotional intelligence. To contact Cara or Susanne, call 919-933-3237 or e-mail: gaddis@communicationsdoctor.com
The Vermont State Nurses’ Foundation
Announces
The Arthur L. Davis Publishing Agency, Inc.
2011 Scholarship

Applications for the $1,000 scholarship are open to Vermont State Nurses’ Association members who are currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate nursing program and who are active in a professional nursing organization. Submit application by August 1, 2011. Please complete the application below and submit it to:

Vermont State Nurses’ Foundation, Inc.
100 Dorset Street, Suite #13
South Burlington, VT 05403

Name: ______________________________________________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________
City: __________________________________State _______________________ Zip ______________
Phone:  ______________________________E-mail: _________________________________________
Nursing Program and Degree Currently Enrolled in: _______________________________________

Briefly describe your activities in the Vermont State Nurses’ Association or other nursing organization within the past three years:
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

UVM College of Medicine
The following educational events are sponsored by the University of Vermont. For more information contact:
Continuing Medical Education
128 Lakeside Avenue, Suite 100
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 656-2292
http://cme.uvm.edu

Vermont Blueprint for Health
Date: 04/11/2011
Location: Sheraton Burlington Hotel & Conference Center - Blueprint
Burlington, VT

2011 Vermont AHEC Geriatrics Conference
Date: 04/12/2011
Location: Capitol Plaza
Montpelier, VT

Child Psychiatry in Primary Care
Date: 05/05/2011-05/06/2011
Location: DoubleTree Hotel
South Burlington, VT

Women’s Health Issues: Perception, Prevention and Practice
Date: 05/11/2011-05/13/2011
Location: Sheraton
So. Burlington, VT

Vermont Summer Pediatric Seminar
Date: 06/16/2011-06/19/2011
Location: The Equinox
Manchester, VT

Women in Medicine 2011
Date: 07/24/2011-07/28/2011
Location: The Stoweflake Hotel & Spa
Stowe, VT
Research Round-Up

The VNC welcomes the submission of nursing abstracts of publications, reports, theses or other scholarly work. The VNC is distributed to 25,000 readers, and it is a wonderful way to share your work and to keep us informed of the wealth of work that nurses are producing throughout Vermont.

The VNC Editorial Board encourages all nurses involved in practice, education, research, administration or other fields to submit their typed abstracts of 200-250 words with a cover letter with the following information:

- Name and Credentials of Author:
- Telephone #: Email address:
- Place of Employment:
- Position:
- Educational institution (if student):*
- Current Year of Study:
- Faculty contact person:

* Student Abstracts must be submitted by their school of nursing.

Abstracts may be e-mailed to vtnurse@sover.net, or a hardcopy can be sent to the VSNA, Inc., VNC Abstract, 100 Dorset Street, # 13, South Burlington, VT 05403.

Legislative Day at the Statehouse for Vermont nurses will be held on April 20, 2011. The theme of this year’s event will be “Harnessing Nurses’ Political Power” and we are honored to have Janet Haebler RN, MSN as our guest speaker. Janet holds the position of Associate Director for State Government Affairs with the American Nurses Association, the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation’s 3.1 million registered nurses through its more than 50 constituent member nurses associations, including the Vermont State Nurses’ Association. She completed her undergraduate degree in nursing at Russell Sage College in New York and master’s degree in nursing with a concentration in administration at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. Throughout almost forty years experience in nursing, Janet has held numerous leadership positions in a variety of settings: acute and long term care, managed care, and academia. She attributes her ability to adapt to policy development in large part to her broad-based experience. Janet spent five years with the New York State Nurses’ Association, during which time she was responsible for the Practice & Government Affairs program. She and her team celebrated such successes as title “nurse” protection and safe patient handling and movement legislation. Janet’s presentation will inform nurses of issues in the nursing profession where nurses can affect positive change through knowledge of the political and regulatory process. It will definitely be an informative and valuable presentation.

The event will begin at the Capital Plaza Hotel conference room at 8:00 a.m. with Janet’s presentation scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Parking is free in the hotel parking area directly behind the hotel. Immediately following her presentation nurses will have the opportunity to go over to the Statehouse and sit in on committee meetings, speak with their representatives and even take an official tour of the Statehouse if they choose. At 1:00 p.m., nurses will be honored in the House Chamber by the reading of the Resolution declaring it “Nurses Day in Vermont.”

Please plan to attend and learn how to become a more effective advocate for the nursing profession and your patients. Please do not hesitate to call me if you need directions or have any questions. My phone number is 802-876-7445 and my e-mail address is vsnalobbyist@comcast.net.

In other news… it continues to be a busy Legislative session. The single payer system is the foremost issue on the agenda. In January, Dr. Hsiao, a renowned Harvard economist, and his team presented an evaluation of Vermont’s current healthcare structure and offered three options for converting it to a single payer system. Dr. Hsiao recommended Option 3 which is a Public/Private system, as the most affordable for Vermont. The report was open for public comment until Feb. 19, 2011. At this time I am unable to inform you which option will be officially chosen by the Legislature since I am writing this in January, but I will post updates to the VSNA website. Despite which option is chosen it is paramount that Vermont nurses be involved in the process of ironing out the details of the plan. Our intimate knowledge of the needs of Vermont patients can help to mold a plan that protects both our patients and our practice.

Other issues that will possibly be addressed in this legislative session that have an impact on the nursing profession include: legalizing physician assisted suicide, taxing sweetened beverages, prevention of violence against healthcare workers, updating and expanding the Vermont Blueprint for Health, safe staffing and dissolving the APRN collaborative agreement requirement. Again, please visit the VSNA website for updates on these and other issues.

The VSNA Committee on Government Affairs is a very energetic, active group this year. We welcome anyone interested in getting involved! Please contact me at vsnalobbyist@comcast.net, (phone) 802-876-7445 or call the VSNA office at 802-651-8886 to join up. We look forward to hearing from you.
NURSES TRUSTED to CARE

In Recognition of Caring Honor a Nurse Through a gift to the Vermont State Nurses’ Foundation Scholarships for Nurses

Nursing continues to be the most trusted profession as indicated in annual surveys. This attests to the collective contributions nurses make as they care for patients, families and communities. Efforts of individual nurses however need special recognition by colleagues, employers, patients, families and friends.

Is this an anniversary year for a colleague you admire? Is this the way that you can thank a mentor? Is this an opportunity for a patient or family to acknowledge excellent care given by a nurse? There are many milestones such as a birthday or retirement to celebrate. These are the times to:

**Honor A Nurse**

**Celebration**

The honored nurses and the persons nominating them will be recognized at the Vermont State Nurses’ Association Convention on October 19, 2011 at the Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, Vermont. The honored nurses each will receive a certificate identifying the reason for the honor. The honored nurses’ names will also appear in the Vermont Nurse Connection and on the VSNF website.

The minimum suggested donation to the fund is $25.00 for an individual and $100.00 for a group (up to six) nurses.

Complete the information requested and mail your contribution to:

Vermont State Nurses’ Foundation
100 Dorset Street, Suite 13, S. Burlington, VT 05403
VSNF is a 501(c)3 organization.
All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

I am honoring: ____________________________________________
Name: __________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________

Please indicate on a separate piece of paper the reason(s) you are recognizing this nurse

Nominator’s name: _______________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________

Submit nominations by 9/19/2011

As the health care environment becomes increasingly complex so does the importance of continuing academic study for nurses. Vermont’s nurses recognize the need for advanced study as they progress in their careers. Two nurses who are continuing their nursing education with support from the VSNF scholarship fund in 2010 are:

Congratulations Pam Kupiec and Megan Hess

Vermont State Nurses Foundation Launches its 2011 Campaign to Honor a Nurse

The American Nurses’ Association announced that the theme for Nurses’ Week, May 6-12, 2011 is *Nurses Trusted to Care.* The theme describes the public’s view of nursing as the most trusted profession. Nurses’ Week is a time to celebrate this accomplishment as well as to reflect on the challenges we face give to fulfill the patient’s right to health care.

Nurses’ Week for the Vermont State Nurses’ Foundation is a time to both celebrate nurses and help them with the most professional challenges. Vermont State Nurse’s Foundation will launch its campaign during Nurses Week and it ends on September 19, 2011. To Honor a Nurse make a minimal donation of $25.00 to the Scholarship Fund. The Foundation awards two scholarships each year to registered nurses who are enrolled in a nursing education baccalaureate, masters or doctoral program. To date the Foundation has awarded sixteen scholarships to nurses. All honored nurses will be recognized at the Vermont State Nurses’ Convention at the Lake Morey Inn in Fairlee, VT and given a certificate describing the reason for the honor.

**2011 Membership and Publicity Committee Update**

The Membership Committee Goals:

- Ensure that VSNA remains relevant to the needs of Vermont nurses
- Retain current members
- Attract new members to the organization
- Increase visibility of nurses and the role we play in health care

The Committee will continue strategies used last year:

- Monthly Committee Meetings
- VNC membership updates each issue
- Ongoing student nurse representative on VSNA board
- Utilization of membership data
- Wear “Ask Me About VSNA” buttons at selected weeks.
- District to District Competition

New strategies to implement this year:

- Member profiles in VNC and on website.
- Ask to be invited to Schools of Nursing to educate about ANA resources, and to speak to students about the importance of joining professional organizations.
- Be visible at nursing specialty organizations.
- Member to Member Challenge.
- Increase member benefits: discounts for health clubs, shoes, uniforms, etc.
- Identify VSNA Ambassadors at worksites

How to join:

Application in this newsletter OR
Visit our site at www.vsna-inc.org/index.htm to download an application.
Stay tuned for more details! The Membership Committee will continue to strive to meet our goals. We look forward to serving you again.

Committee Members: Lauren Bailey, June Benoit, Richard Frank, Theresa Haywood, Michelle Wade, and Ann Laramee, Chair.

For more information visit the website www.vsna-inc.org/index.htm
Ideas or comments please direct them to Ann Laramee, chair of the committee at ann.laramee@vtmednet.org
VSNA New Members:

District 1
- Barbara Liberty
- Tonya Howard
- Jane Hudak
- Susan Sullivan

District 3
- Danny Boudreau
- Karen Glade

IS YOUR NURSING ORGANIZATION PLANNING AN EDUCATION PROGRAM?

CONSIDER APPLYING FOR CONTACT HOUR APPROVAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL THE VSNA OFFICE @ (802) 651-8886

Vermont State Nurses’ Association, Inc. is accredited as an approver of continuing education in nursing by the American Nurses’ Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

VSNA District Updates

District 1
The following offices come up for vote this year for District 1:
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- District Director

Nominations will be accepted by District I officers no later than February 25th, 2011.

We have tentatively set the date for our annual meeting as April 14th. The meeting was moved up to April based on feedback from members attending last year’s event. Confirmation of this date is contingent on speaker availability. Annual meeting brochure and ballots will be mailed out March 14th.
Looking Forward, Looking Back: The Vermont State Board of Nursing Celebrates Its Centennial

Vermont’s first “nurse registration law” was passed in 1911, the fourth state to adopt such legislation. The current Board of Nursing is planning some celebratory and educational events to recognize and publicize the 100th anniversary milestone.

Since 1911, there have been many revisions and additions to the statutes and Administrative Rules in response to evolving expectations of the public and monumental changes in healthcare and the nursing profession.

The first State Board of Registration for Nurses had three members, two of whom were physicians. That contrasts with the composition of the current Board which has 10 members (1 APRN, 2 LPNs, 1 LNA, 2 public members, and four RNs).

One of the primary functions of the original Board was the regulation of “training schools and curricula.” Long before NCLEX, the Board was responsible for developing and administering examinations for new graduates. Setting standards for nursing education remains an important aspect of the work of the Board. All Board functions ultimately stem from the principle of protecting the public.

The decade between 1910 and 1920 was a very active one for nursing on the national scene and in Vermont. During that era many nursing organizations began and flourished. There is evidence of much collaboration among them, including the State Board of Registration for Nurses, the Vermont State Nurses’ Association, the Vermont League of Nursing Education, and the Red Cross Nursing Service. The early history of collaboration among nursing organizations in Vermont laid a strong foundation that persists to this day.

Stay tuned for more information on an event being planned for National Nurses Week in May and one to be scheduled during the third week of September.

If you have any information or memorabilia on the Vermont State Board of Nursing during its 100-year history, please consider sharing it with the Board office by contacting Elizabeth Hansen at 802-828-2819 or ehansen@sec.state.vt.us.

References:

Voices of Vermont Nurses” Nursing in Vermont, 1941–1996 (VSNA, 2000)
We Who Serve: A Story of Nursing in Vermont (VSNA, 1941)

Still Time To Be Counted…..

At the time of relicensure, all Vermont RNs and APRNs were invited to participate in the 2011 VT Nurse Relicensure Survey. If you haven’t done this yet, you have until June 1, 2011 to take the survey at www.choose nursingvt.org/survey and enter into the drawing for:

The all new Kindle 3G

Smaller, Lighter, Faster, with 50% Better Contrast

Free 3G Wireless

All you need is your license number to log-in to the confidential survey (this avoids duplications). The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. By participating in this survey, you are helping to provide key data used in educational resource decisions, policy making, grant writing, and as general information for nurses, health care employers and other stakeholders.

So good luck in the drawing and thanks for doing your part for Vermont nursing.

Mary Val Palumbo DNP APRN
UVM AHEC Nursing Research
mpalumbo@uvm.edu
802 656-0023
National Nurses Week History

National Nurses Week begins each year on May 6th and ends on May 12th. Florence Nightingale’s birthday. These permanent dates enhance planning and position National Nurses Week as an established recognition event. As of 1998, May 8 was designated as National Student Nurses Day, to be celebrated annually. And as of 2003, National School Nurse Day is celebrated on the Wednesday within National Nurses Week (May 6-12) each year.

The nursing profession has been supported and promoted by the American Nurses Association (ANA) since 1896. Each of ANA’s state and territorial nurses associations promotes the nursing profession at the state and regional levels. Each conducts celebrations on these dates to recognize the contributions that nurses and nursing make to the community.

The ANA supports and encourages National Nurses Week recognition programs through the state and district nurses associations, other specialty nursing organizations, educational facilities, and independent health care companies and institutions.

A Brief History of National Nurses Week

1953 Dorothy Sutherland of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare sent a proposal to President Eisenhower to proclaim a “Nurse Day” in October of the following year. The proclamation was never made.

1954 National Nurse Week was observed from October 11-16. The year of the observance marked the 100th anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s mission to Crimea. Representative Frances P. Bolton sponsored the bill for a nurse week. Apparently, a bill for a National Nurse Week was introduced in the 1955 Congress, but no action was taken. Congress discontinued its practice of joint resolutions for national weeks of various kinds.

1972 Again a resolution was presented by the House of Representatives for the President to proclaim “National Registered Nurse Day.” It did not occur.

1974 In January of that year, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) proclaimed that May 12 would be “International Nurse Day.” (May 12 is the birthday of Florence Nightingale.) Since 1965, the ICN has celebrated “International Nurse Day.”

1974 In February of that year, a week was designated by the White House as National Nurse Week, and President Nixon issued a proclamation.

1978 New Jersey Governor Brendan Byrne declared May 6 as “Nurses Day.” Edward Scanlan, of Red Bank, N.J., took up the cause to perpetuate the recognition of nurses in his state. Mr. Scanlan had this date listed in Chase’s Calendar of Annual Events. He promoted the celebration on its own.

1981 ANA, along with various nursing organizations, rallied to support a resolution initiated by nurses in New Mexico, through their Congressman, Manuel Lujan, to have May 6, 1982, established as “National Recognition Day for Nurses.”

1982 In February, the ANA Board of Directors formally acknowledged May 6, 1982 as “National Nurses Day.” The action affirmed a joint resolution of the United States Congress designating May 6 as “National Recognition Day for Nurses.”

1982 President Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation on March 25, proclaiming “National Recognition Day for Nurses” to be May 6, 1982.

1990 The ANA Board of Directors expanded the recognition of nurses to a week-long celebration, declaring May 6-12, 1991, as National Nurses Week.

1993 The ANA Board of Directors designated May 6-12 as permanent dates to observe National Nurses Week in 1994 and in all subsequent years.

1996 The ANA initiated “National RN Recognition Day” on May 6, 1996, to honor the nation’s indispensable registered nurses for their tireless commitment 365 days a year. The ANA encourages its state and territorial nurses associations and other organizations to acknowledge May 6, 1996 as “National RN Recognition Day.”

1997 The ANA Board of Directors, at the request of the National Student Nurses Association, designated May 8 as National Student Nurses Day.

Suggestions on How to Celebrate National Nurses Week

- Hold a special celebration or reception to recognize a nurse or several nurses in your community. These nurses could be honored for heroic acts, years of service to the community, exemplary courage, or their commitment to the nursing profession over the years.
- Promote a positive, realistic image of registered nurses by sponsoring health fairs, conducting preventive screenings in underserved areas, organizing a walk-a-thon, etc
- Place an article in your state or local newspaper(s) about National Nurses Week and the value of nurses.
- Invite a politician–local, state or federal—to accompany a nurse or several nurses at their place of employment for a day or part of a day. Health care remains an issue of tremendous importance to voters. Politicians should be visible and accountable for their positions on health care. This is a win-win situation and it offers good media coverage potential.
- Sponsor a community-wide event, such as a coloring contest or poem-writing contest for school children. The children could acknowledge their favorite nurse, a famous nurse, or family member who is a nurse–past or present—in a colorful drawing. The drawings could be displayed in local schools, hospitals, nursing homes, etc.
- Work cooperatively with hospitals, schools, and libraries to set up a special display for National Nurses Week.
- Host a press conference. Discuss an important health care issue in your community; release the findings of a local survey; honor a nurse for a heroic act; or bestow an “honorary” nurse title to a deserving politician or civic leader.
- Organize a free cholesterol and/or blood pressure screening in your local community and promote via radio announcements, flyers, posters, etc.
- Host a hearing before city council or hold a town meeting on nursing’s concerns about the recent trends in health care (nurses being replaced by unlicensed assistive personnel, safety and quality of care issues, etc.)
- Invite a local celebrity (one who has spoken about health care in the past; one who has personally been a patient of a nurse; or one whose family member has been a patient) and request his/her sponsorship of National Nurse Recognition Day and/or National Nurses Week. Hold an event and ask him/her to speak about a personal experience in which he/she was cared for by a nurse.
- Host a fund-raiser (i.e., walk-a-thon) and donate money to a local charity. Emphasize the importance of registered nurses in our nation’s health care system; pay tribute to a local nurse; or recognize all registered nurses who are indispensable and provide care selflessly 24-hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.
- Request a proclamation from your mayor/governor declaring May 6 as National Nurse Recognition Day and/or May 6-12 as National Nurses Week. (Sample proclamation).
- Host an editorial board meeting with leading state or local newspapers. Discuss the importance of registered nurses at the bedside and the nursing profession’s concerns about current issues, specifically those related to safety and quality of care.
- Organize a candlelight vigil on National Nurse Recognition Day (May 6) in honor of the hard work and commitment of the nurses in America.
- Suggest that your state or local newspaper solicit stories from readers who would like to pay tribute to a nurse who provided exemplary care.
- Press release is available.
- Obtain support from other nursing and health care organizations in your area by asking them to sponsor National Nurse Recognition Day and/or National Nurses Week and to hold a joint event with your organization.