



The Mississippi RN

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Quarterly circulation approximately 55,000 to all RNs, LPNs, and Student Nurses in Mississippi.

Fall 2013

A Message from the President

By Gayle Harrell, NP-C, CWCN

As I look back over the past four years, I can't believe that my tenure as President will soon be completed. This year has been full of activity for the Board members and the MNA staff. I want to thank each of them for their support, not for just this year, but throughout my time as President of MNA!



Gayle Harrell

The American Nurses Association (ANA) held its first Membership Assembly in June. Jennifer Hitt, Vice-President, and I were honored to be MNA's representatives. In past years, ANA's House of Delegates consisted of over 600 delegates, whereas the Membership Assembly consisted of just over 200 representatives. This change was provided by the amendment to ANA's bylaws passed last year. Each associate group (such as MNA) was allowed two membership representatives. Each representative's vote was weighted according to the membership of their association. ANA has encouraged states that are interested to join together and share resources to operate their local associations by becoming members of regional multi-state groups. As of the Membership Assembly, less than half of the states have joined these multi-state groups. MNA remains one of the few states collecting its own membership dues, which allows us to verify membership more easily.

One of the most important elements of the Membership Assembly is Lobby Day. There were four main topics for ANA's Lobby Day: Safe Patient Handling and Mobility; Safe Staffing; the Home Healthcare Planning and Improvement Act; and the Medicare regulation that would restrict the ability of APRNs to serve their patients by delaying care until additional required documentation is completed for Durable Medical Equipment. All of these have been a primary focus for several years. Senator Roger Wicker, Congressman Gregg Harper and Congressman Alan Nunnelee have all joined the Nursing Caucus to keep abreast of healthcare topics impacting nursing and healthcare. We appreciate the time that these individuals spent with us discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each of these items and how nursing could join other healthcare team members to improve the healthcare environment and patient access and safety. As a result of the support of many individuals, including Congressman Nunnelee, the deadline for implementation

of the new DME requirements was postponed from July 1 to October 1, 2013. During the Membership Assembly, a discussion was held regarding the feasibility of moving the Membership Assembly to other parts of the country which would eliminate Lobby Day. Lobby Day is a very important avenue to make contacts with not only the Congressmen, but their assistants who serve as our contacts on a day-to-day basis. With this in mind, ANA has elected for the Membership Assembly to remain in a location conducive to continuing the tradition of Lobby Day.

At the state level, MNA is working diligently to address the regulations that would negatively affect APRNs in the state and their patients. In this advanced technical environment, collaboration with other healthcare providers can be achieved with little effort. Barriers ultimately adversely affect our patients.

As a registered nurse, I'm proud to be part of the nursing profession. A recent trip also reminded me how privileged we, as nurses, are to be able to provide care and resources to our patients on a daily basis. Jennifer Hitt, Vice-President, and I joined 17 others on what was my first trip to Haiti to provide healthcare to individuals in small villages having limited access to healthcare. This experience helped me to appreciate not only the opportunities our patients have to receive healthcare, but how fortunate we are to have access to resources to provide that care. I will be participating in another medical mission trip at the end of the summer. I am looking forward to reaching out to those that need our expertise not only for diagnosis and medication, but education. Health education, as we all know, often is more important than the medications we supply, as education enables individuals to take control and make changes in their lives.

Our greatest asset is the nurses in Mississippi. We need all nurses to join together to encourage decision makers to support and include the nursing profession in all aspects of the development and implementation of policies and/or programs regarding healthcare. While our numbers in Mississippi are large – greater than 55,000 – we are not always included in the decision making process until after final decisions have been made. MNA has through the years kept nursing at the table. In this volatile environment, it is even more important that our 55,000 voices be heard. With your participation as a member, MNA has the ability to bring those voices to the forefront. Without nurses, the hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and home health companies can't provide healthcare to patients. Nurses have expertise and firsthand knowledge of the healthcare challenges facing our state and our patients. We, as nurses, can provide valuable input for solutions. TODAY you can be a part of the efforts MNA has planned to provide education for nurses, patients and legislators. JOIN MNA TODAY! Be a part of the solution through your membership, participation or BOTH!

Executive Director's Column

by Teresa Malone

"Hard working" and "dedicated" are words that have often used to describe nurses. This description could not be more appropriate for the many MNA members serving tirelessly as volunteers on our committees, councils, and special projects, and in our local districts across the State. These selfless individuals are one of the main reasons for the past success of MNA, and a critical component for ensuring our continued success. To see a prime example of what these volunteers mean to our organization, one need look no further than at our upcoming annual Convention to be held October 22nd through October 25th in Biloxi. Working together to provide the nurses in Mississippi an outstanding educational and networking opportunity, the Convention Planning Committee, Provider Unit, and Council on Nursing Research have put together a truly unique convention with the theme "Mississippi Nurses on the Hunt." This year's Convention will have a laid-back "camo" style that we hope you will enjoy! Along with exciting presentations, we have expanded access to exhibitors and provided more opportunities for networking with experts in a variety of fields, including many of your peers. And speaking of your peers, please remember to thank all of the MNA volunteers who have helped make all this possible. Don't miss this opportunity! Join us at the Convention!



Teresa Malone

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2013 ANNUAL CONVENTION

2013 Annual Convention: *Mississippi Nurses on the Hunt*

by Amy Forsythe, BSN, MSN, NP-C, MNA Board, Director, Council on Organizational Affairs

I am so excited about MNA's 102nd Annual Convention! It will be my last serving as your Director of Organizational Affairs.... thanks for the memories! I have been honored to serve you in this capacity for the last 4 years. I will take with me many great memories including the grand festivities surrounding our centennial. Each year, I think we cannot surpass the success of the previous year, and yet, I am always pleasantly surprised. I know that this year will be no exception! We have so many exciting events planned and, as always, knowledgeable and fun speakers. We will have special CE offerings this year to refresh ourselves in areas such as pharmacology, physiology



Amy Forsythe

and pathophysiology, but don't expect the usual format. Bring your game faces!

Our theme this year is "Mississippi Nurses on the Hunt." Be sure to bring out that winter camouflage. If you don't have any, that's fine. We will have your choice of pink or green camouflage MNA shirts for sale at Marketplace. We will also have some extra goodies to purchase for that special someone you left at home or even a nice Christmas present for that person who has always supported your nursing career endeavors.

Be sure to sign up for the dinner cruise! Those that were present at last year's cruise go on and on about the great time they had. We will be sure to have another karaoke machine, so you can belt out your favorite tune under the stars! This is a laid-back, have-a-good-time cruise, so just wear your camouflage. Please bring a canned good or two to donate to the local food bank.

Our 2013 Convention will be filled with poster presentations, CE opportunities, networking, fun and laughter! We have a dynamic keynote speaker, Marc Fomby joining us in Biloxi.

Thank you to the Provider Unit and Deloris Slade for working so hard to obtain the best speakers, to the Nursing Research Council and Mary Stewart for providing us with a thought-provoking poster session, and dear to my heart, the Convention Planning Committee for working so hard to put together this wonderful convention.

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2013 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Special Thanks

to the Provident Unit Committee and the Convention Planning Committee for working so diligently to make our 2013 Annual Convention the best ever!

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We are ON THE HUNT for Poster Abstracts at 2013 MNA Convention!

by **Mary W. Stewart, PhD, RN**
MNA Board Director, Council on Nursing Research

New! The MNA Research Council will host a round table forum to showcase the research posters at our Convention in Biloxi. This format will allow for informal conversations about the projects; and green treats will be available! Participants will be able to identify current innovative and research projects relevant for registered nurses in various roles and settings. We were on the look-out for submissions describing unique innovations or research projects in the areas of professional nursing, and we had great success! Topics include patient care, clinical interventions, nursing leadership, and nursing

education. Students at all levels of nursing education were strongly encouraged to submit an abstract that describes recent or ongoing work in the discipline. This will be an excellent forum for dissemination of PhD dissertations and DNP capstones. Selection of posters was by peer review and based on creativity, clarity, and relevance to the mission of MNA. The first author received \$50 off the convention registration. **In addition to the educational opportunities, you will get a sneak preview of what you'll experience if you sign up for MNA's upcoming trip to Ireland! Tá súil agam go bhfeicfidh mé thú ansin! (Hope to see you there!)**



Mary Stewart



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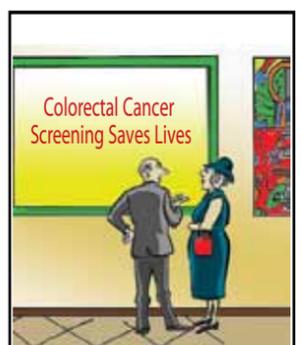


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- DOT Certified Medical Examiners Training: Tupelo, September 21, 2013
- DOT Certified Medical Examiners Training: Hattiesburg, September 28, 2013
- DOT Certified Medical Examiners Training: Southaven, October 12, 2013
- MS Nurses' Association Annual Convention: Biloxi, October 22-25, 2013
- DOT Certified Medical Examiners Training: Biloxi, October 26, 2013
- DOT Certified Medical Examiners Training: Cleveland, November 9, 2013
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Graham Represents Public Health Nursing Organizations in Meeting with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Juanita Graham, DNP, RN, FRSPH

On May 1, 2013, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and HRSA Administrator Mark Wakefield, PhD, RN invited nursing organizations to appoint a representative to meet at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) office in Washington, D.C., for a discussion in advance of National Nurse Week. Juanita Graham, DNP, RN, FRSPH represented both the Association of Public Health Nurses (APHN) and the Public Health Nursing Section of the American Public Health



Juanita Graham

Association (APHA/PHN). Speakers at the event included Dr. Wakefield, DHHS Director of Public Health Policy Maya Alvarez, and DHHS Deputy Secretary Bill Corr. Opening remarks covered what nurses should know about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the role of nursing in implementing the ACA.

Mr. Corr said, "Nursing will play a critical role in reshaping healthcare and must be in the mix in redefining the healthcare delivery system." Dr. Wakefield provided an overview of nurse investments from DHHS and HRSA through implementation of the ACA. Said Wakefield, "Through the ACA and other mechanisms, over \$1.3 billion has been invested in nursing over the course of the current administration." Wakefield predicted that the next "big push" would be outreach and enrollment in insurance, identifying nursing as a significant partner.

Dr. Graham posed the question of how public health nursing could be expected to continue their tradition of filling gaps in health services and health promotion despite a weakening of the public health infrastructure. Access-to-care issues continue to be a significant concern, even in states where Medicaid enrollment has already begun to expand. Having a payer source does not necessarily guarantee that patients will be able to secure an appointment with a healthcare provider in many rural and medically underserved communities. This is an optimal setting for public health nursing to intervene. Wakefield responded with a discussion of investments in the public health workforce and public health practice.

In a follow-up transmittal, Wakefield added the following message for nurses:

"The Affordable Care Act increases access to health insurance coverage and health services for all Americans. Everyone involved in health care in the U.S. has a role to play, including nursing organizations, nurses and those they serve."

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Knock Their Socks Off! A Nurse Practitioner's Approach to Care

by John Scallions, FNP-BC,
Family First Clinic of Hernando

It seems at this particular time we are all concentrating on the specific legal aspects we are facing in our profession, as we all should be. Muscles tense, shoulders shrugged up to our earlobes and tension headaches soaring beyond belief! It is very important to remember to introduce a healthy portion of levity into your everyday life as well as your practice. We must not forget that we, as well as our prescribed regimens, are an integral aspect of our patients healing/recovery process! We have an amazing opportunity to impact the lives of others and must make the best of just a few short minutes.

How do you begin your day? How do you pump yourself up? Do you have a theme song that puts pep in your step? I start my day by picking out my socks! Yes, you read that correctly—socks, socks that are vibrant and often unusual in nature. It sounds crazy, but it works for me. I am known for wearing loud, brightly colored socks. My patients find it funny; it creates conversation and a memory. When I left my previous job at a cardiology group to go back to family practice, my passion, I walked in my last day and found fifty-one pairs of socks dangling from the ceiling of the employee lounge. It was hysterical, but also heartwarming to see all those new opportunities for conversation hanging from the ceiling. I like having a signature if you will. Of course I want my main signature to be the level of care I provide, but a little added giggle here and there just helps the medicine go down.

Have you thought about that concept? What is your signature? Aside from your excellent care, what sets you apart? I had a patient remark to one of my staff members, "I may not feel better right when I leave the clinic, but I will always leave smiling or laughing." That statement spoke volumes to me. From a holistic aspect I had made a difference in the patient's emotional wellbeing. I had made her laugh. My care had already taken effect.

Enter stage right: How do you enter the stage (exam room)? Some may be too young to remember the old television series, *Fantasy Island*. Mr. Roarke, the lead character, would shout to all his employees as the plane landed, "Smiles, smiles everyone!" It is so simple, yet so true. Nothing breaks a barrier like a smile. Your entrance sets the entire tone of the exam. Waiting rooms, crying babies, and hacking coughs are only just a few of the wonderful sites to be seen and heard at your local healthcare facility. Hopefully, the patient will not also have to experience a staff that seems to have tossed back a gulp of lemon juice as they lead you to a room or check your vitals.

Exit stage left: Leave with them wanting more. It is so important to plant the seed of continuity. Establishing trust, respect, and a truly memorable visit is essential. Patients crave an individual experience that doesn't feel bland or cookie-cutter in nature. Here in the South, we often toss out the saying, "How's your Mama and them?" I have to admit it; I use it, especially with my established patients. It builds a sense of community and gives you something to remember for their next visit. Often, I will make a brief entry

in my dictation about our social interchange that triggers conversation during a follow-up visit. For example, "Patient states he goes fishing twice a week." I love the look on their face when you ask questions such as, "Well, how big was the one that got away this time?" Again, those few moments belong to the patient, and it is crucial they feel comfortable enough to share key information to assist you with your diagnosis. Take the time to give them individualized care.

I love the passage in the Bible, Proverbs 17:22, that reads, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." I don't know about you, but hard work, time and maybe a little touch of osteoarthritis is doing enough to my bones! All kidding aside, doesn't laughter make you feel better? There is nothing quite like a good belly-shaking laugh that is so strong it brings tears to your eyes. The same thing goes for your patients. It is important to comfort the tears of sadness, but evoking so much laughter creating tears, just adds another unexpected level of care. It seems to help melt away stress and again creates that memory I keep mentioning. That laugh may again pop up at a crucial time during a dark moment of your patient's day. I think we should all be handing out prescriptions for "laughter prn!"

Let's face it. Life is tough, especially if you are dealing with illness. We are experts in treating various bugs and infections, but remember, laughter is also infectious. Don't be afraid to spread it and allow your patients to see your personality. Break the proverbial mold and knock their socks off!



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Marilyn Ellis of Gulfport was the Mississippi recipient of the 2013 AANP State Award for Excellence. She is a Certified Adult Nurse Practitioner with more than 35 years NP experience. She received her Masters degree in Nursing from USM in 1997 and holds Certificate as an Adult Nurse Practitioner from the University of Alabama, Birmingham as well as a Bachelors in Nursing from Northwestern Louisiana State University. Ellis has spent the majority of her nursing career within the Veterans Healthcare System in Biloxi where she practiced in Primary Care and Cardiology. She is a member of the Mississippi Nurses' Association and additionally serves as state chairperson of the continuing education committee. She formerly served on the MNA Board of Directors. She was selected as MNA Nurse of the Year in 2004.

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During the upgrade, I did not have the pleasure of asking you to purchase tickets online for our 2013 Volvo giveaway. Please accept my apology.

I am now ready to ask again because we are behind on our goal of selling 800 or more tickets this year. The process is the same, visit www.msursesfoundation.com and click on "Purchase Tickets Online" to complete your order. Tickets can also be purchased by calling our office at (601)-898-0850.

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Sincerely,
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Student Nurses News



MASN attended the NSNA National Convention in North Carolina, April 2013

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2013 Betty Dickson Policy Scholarship

by Mary Atkinson Smith,
DNP, FNP-BC, ONP-C, RNFA, CNOR

I was honored to be recently chosen as the recipient of the **2013 Betty Dickson Policy Scholarship** by the Mississippi Nurses Foundation. At about this same time, I was delighted to be selected as the sole recipient of a national scholarship awarded by the Nursing Organizations Alliance (The Alliance) to participate in the Nurse in Washington Internship in Washington, DC. The Alliance is a coalition of nursing organizations united to create a strong voice for nurses, and provide a forum for identification, education, and collaboration, building on issues of common interest to advance the nursing profession.

The experience I gained in Washington from these two opportunities was definitely very educational and enlightening for me from a healthcare standpoint. Registered nurses and nurse practitioners serve as strong advocates for our patients, when it comes to influencing the legislative process and policymaking. This nursing focused interaction with federal legislators reinforced the fact that federal legislators view nurses as being very trustworthy, tenacious, reliable, and understanding the “big picture” of today’s healthcare issues. My participation also made me more aware of the direct impact that federal healthcare policy making has on specific patient populations. I was able to meet face to face with senators, congressmen, and their legislative staff to discuss first-hand the difficulties and frustrations patients, and providers alike, are experiencing in the world of healthcare.

This experience also allowed for networking with other nurses across the nation and created a forum of education and collaboration. I met nurses from various specialties and backgrounds, but there was one common theme among us all: our patient population. We, as nurses, desire what is best for our patients and serve as an advocate for them in this complex world of healthcare. Nurses and patients are finding the navigation of today’s healthcare system to be extremely challenging, baffling, and disheartening at times. We must engage lawmakers and their legislative staff, so they are well aware of these challenges along with specific recommendations for improvement.

As a nurse practitioner, and an assistant professor of nursing in academia, my time in Washington was a very valuable experience for me personally and professionally. I am looking forward to utilizing the knowledge I gained, from this internship, to further enhance my influence on healthcare legislation on a state and federal level, and to serve as a strong advocate for my patients, who reside in the most rural parts of my state. I will also encourage my nursing colleagues, nursing students, and the public, in general, to communicate their healthcare concerns to their local, state, and federal lawmakers. The lawmakers want to hear directly from their constituents. Direct input and expertise from nurses provides lawmakers, and their legislative staff, with the necessary knowledge needed to create healthcare policy that will have a positive impact on society as a whole, which is extremely important during this time of healthcare reform in the United States.

I want to express my appreciation to the Mississippi Nurses Foundation for being chosen as the first recipient of the **Betty Dickson Policy Scholarship**. I am extremely honored to receive this scholarship named after a legacy, political leader, and mentor in the history of Mississippi nursing: Ms. Betty Dickson.

In Memoriam

Dr. Gerry Cadenhead Fletcher was a dear friend, supporter and advisor of The University of Southern Mississippi College of Nursing and she will be greatly missed by all that had the privilege to work with her.

Dr. Fletcher earned degrees at Baylor and The University of Colorado before completing her PhD at The University of Texas at Austin. She began her career at The University of Southern Mississippi in 1980 as a Chair for the Baccalaureate Program and Associate Professor. Throughout her nursing career at Southern Miss, Dr. Fletcher served in the roles of Assistant Dean and Associate Professor and served as Dean of the College of Nursing from 1997-2001.

Dr. Fletcher was active in many areas of nursing including service, education and administration. She worked as an Assistant Administrator at Memorial Hospital in Gulfport for several years and was actively involved with the Mississippi Nurses Association, including service as a board member. Along with a love for nursing, she was also an avid supporter of Southern Miss Athletics. Dr. Fletcher was also a long time member of the Mississippi Nurses’ Association. Her legacy and examples of leadership will forever be present at the Southern Miss College of Nursing.



Dr. Gerry Fletcher

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Mississippi Nurses Foundation Awards \$60,000

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The Mississippi Nurses Foundation recently awarded \$60,000 in stipends. Stipend funds were raised through the State of Mississippi Nurses Car Tag Program-Nurses Touch Lives and awarded to registered nurses and nursing students enrolled in an accredited Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters or Doctoral Nursing Program in Mississippi.

After a thorough review of applications, 10 recipients were chosen. As full-time students, the recipients will be awarded a total of \$6,000 to be received in increments of \$500 each month for 12 months beginning in August, 2013 through July, 2014. Recipients are required to sign a contract with the Mississippi Nurses Foundation to work as a full time Nurse in Mississippi within the first two years following completion of the program.

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Rosalyn Howard

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For additional information about the Car Tag Stipend/Scholarship Program, please contact the Mississippi Nurses Foundation at 601-898-0850 or www.msnursesfoundation.com.

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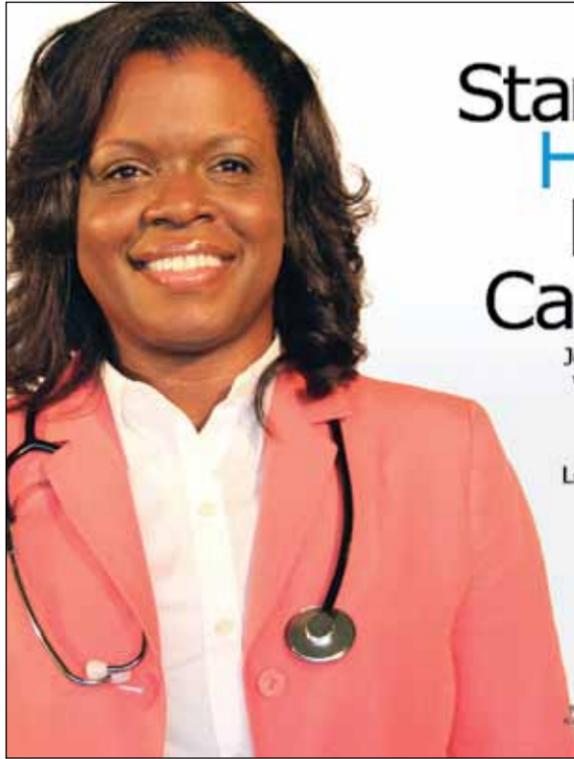
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