

ANA Membership Assembly gathers during 125th anniversary year

By Elizabeth Moore, MFA

As RNs continue to contend with effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 virtual annual American Nurses Association (ANA) Membership Assembly convened on June 18 to conduct the business of the association. More than 400 representatives from ANA's constituent and state nurses associations (C/SNAs), the Individual Member Division, organizational affiliates, the ANA Board of Directors, and others attended the meeting.

Afterward, eligible voting representatives elected ANA officers and approved final recommendations from the ANA Professional Policy Committee.

A commitment to care

"As we celebrate ANA's 125th anniversary in these extraordinary times, I have never been more thankful for the dedication, competence, and responsiveness of our nursing workforce," said ANA President Ernest Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN, in his address. He praised nurses for their commitment to patient care during the pandemic. "No matter how tired and overwhelmed we were after torturous shifts, nurses persisted and persevered in caring for patients and their families, and Americans became more aware of the strains of our profession and our commitment to our communities."



Ernest Grant

Grant outlined the strength of ANA's response on behalf of nurses in 2020, noting the many resources the association deployed quickly for the entire nursing workforce, including webinars, videos, fact sheets, and web pages. "During a chaotic time, we sought to maintain high standards in clinical practice and promote safe, ethical work settings," he said.

In her remarks, ANA Enterprise CEO Loressa Cole, DNP, MBA, RN, FACHE, NEA-BC, FAAN, pointed to membership growth and the nursing community's acknowledgement that ANA was there for them. "We witnessed a renewed awareness among our members of ANA's value and support in advocating for them during this dangerous, stressful time for healthcare workers."



Loressa Cole

ANA earned increased credibility and visibility in Congress, Grant said, while drawing attention to sup-



ply shortages and how healthcare disparities contributed to the pandemic's disproportionate burden on communities of color. In addition, ANA supported the Biden administration's efforts to increase funding for mental health services.

ANA also was at the forefront of vaccine education for nurses and the public, with the goal of getting all Americans vaccinated, Grant said. Through the Center for Ethics and Human Rights, ANA rolled out Guiding Principles for Nurses and the COVID-19 Vaccines. The association partnered with other healthcare organizations to create many education tools, including the COVID Vaccine Facts for Nurses program, launched in March with the American Nurses Foundation and 18 other organizations.

Grant noted the association's participation in public service campaigns promoting COVID-19 vaccines. For example, "It's Up to You," an Ad Council-COVID Collaborative initiative, is one of the largest public education efforts in U.S. history.

In addition, ANA partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics on Project Firstline, a collaborative effort to educate all U.S. healthcare workers with a foundational understanding of infection prevention and control.

"Other issues also required our response and engagement," Grant said. "The pandemic both exacerbated and shined a light on healthcare disparities and racism." He acknowledged that ANA and the nursing profession have a long way to go in recognizing and overcoming racism within. "Eradicating racism in nursing starts with us," Grant emphasized.

Establishing excellence

In her remarks, ANA CNO Debbie Hatmaker, PhD, RN, FAAN, recognized the association's 125th anniversary