



Nurses rising

Recognizing, elevating, and caring for RNs during a pandemic

AS WE CELEBRATED the inauguration of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, the first woman and person of Black and Asian descent to be elected vice president of the United States, nursing also had cause to celebrate as nurses were elevated to high-profile positions.

President Biden named Jane Hopkins, RNMH, to his COVID-19 Task Force and Rear Admiral Susan Orsega, MSN, FNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN, as acting U.S. Surgeon General, pending the confirmation of Vivek Murthy, MD. In addition, Rear Admiral Aisha K. Mix, DNP, MPH, RN, NHDP-BC, has served as chief nurse officer in the U.S. Public Health Service since 2019. With Congresswoman Cori Bush's successful election, three nurses now serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Bush (D-MO) joins Reps. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and Lauren Underwood (D-IL) who were re-elected. These nurses are extraordinary leaders, and as people of color, they better represent our nation's rich diversity.

We have long said that nurses need to be at decision-making tables, and the American Nurses Association (ANA) is in regular communication with the White House, federal agencies, and Congress to be the voice for the profession. The Nurses on Boards Coalition, with ANA and the Foundation among its founders, reached the significant milestone in 2020 of 10,000 nurses serving on boards. We're making progress.

The pandemic has raised nurses' visibility in the media. At the national level, we've been persistent in our rapid response to breaking news and have focused on cultivating strong relationships with national media outlets and networks to ensure ANA is viewed as a credible source and to advocate for nursing's priorities throughout this unprecedented public health crisis. For instance, we used the media to sound the alarm when nurses and other health-care professionals faced shortages of personal protective equipment and other critical supplies. As individuals, we can use various media

channels to make our voices heard. For example, Nurse Alice (aka Alice Benjamin, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC) of ANA\California and ANA board member Jennifer Gil, MSN, RN, leverage the media as nursing and health experts.

Looking ahead to our second Nurses Month celebration in May, the ongoing pandemic makes honoring nurses even more important. We'll build on last year's expansion to a full month to recognize the nation's more than 4.2 million RNs. "Nurses Make a Difference" is the theme, with a distinct focus each week: self-care, recognition, professional development, and community engagement. Get involved at anayearofthenurse.org and follow us at #NursesMonth.

Consider sharing your knowledge at the grass roots level. One of our strongest skills is our ability to communicate health information to patients and consumers calmly and clearly. Find ways to safely volunteer with a local organization, at your place of worship, or in your child's school, using appropriate precautions. Bring your unique perspective to local government or business. Head to RNAction.org to contact your members of Congress, or download our advocacy toolkit for ways to advocate both personally and professionally.

Underscoring the importance of and offering resources for self-care has been an ANA standing priority, as demonstrated by the Healthy Nurse Healthy Nation™ program (HNHN.org) and the 2020 launch of the Well-Being Initiative (nursingworld.org/thewellbeinginitiative). Given the ongoing stress of the pandemic, I strongly encourage you to take time for self-care. Don't suffer in silence. Take care of your colleagues, too. Remember, to access ANA Enterprise resources, developed by nurses, for nurses.

As always, thank you for persevering. I have never been prouder to be a nurse. You're making a difference.



Ernest J. Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN
President, American Nurses Association

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