



Brian Mohika

A veteran and an entrepreneur

Brian Mohika took setbacks in stride and found success.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE veteran Brian Mohika, BSN, RN, has advocated for patient comfort his entire career. Starting as a phlebotomist, then earning a radiology degree, Mohika realized he wanted to be a nurse after working with RNs in interventional radiology. Caring for patients who relied on catheter bags took his career in a whole new direction. ANA spoke with Mohika, an ANA Innovation Advisory Board member, about his company, CathWear, and his commitment to advancing nurse innovation.

Tell us about CathWear. How did you go from idea to product to business?

I walked into the operating room during a shift and saw a patient with a urinary catheter and leg bag attached to their thigh. I had a vision of underwear that would hold the leg bag, making the patient's catheter use easier and more comfortable. That day, I started drawing sketches of what the underwear would look like and what it would need to work. My military experience gave me high attention to detail, so I was able to draw it from different angles and with different tube placements. From there, I had samples made and gave them to patients for feedback. After creating a prototype, my partners and I filed for a patent, won an invention contest—and then put the whole idea on the shelf for 2 years. So, it was 9 years from getting the idea to where we are now, with a fully functional company.

What advice would you offer nurses who have innovative ideas?

Entrepreneurship is a long, slow crawl! Most people don't understand what a long road it can be. If someone told me 9 years ago that it would take this long to get my product to market, I would have quit then. You've got to be persistent. Stay focused on doing the next step. Not every part of the journey is satisfying. You have to push through the tough mo-

ments and stay motivated. I talk about this in my book, *Let it Flow*.

What do you want to accomplish as an ANA Innovation Advisory Board member?

I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to support other nurses. The board meets quarterly to explore ways to help nurses improve healthcare with innovation. When I started working on CathWear, I didn't know there were other nurse inventors. I didn't learn in nursing school that there could be a nursing career outside of a hospital. Nurse innovators need to know there are many ways to impact nursing care. The workarounds that nurses create reflect innovation. We are at the forefront of healthcare innovation because of our unique relationship with patients; we see their plight.

How can nurse leaders support nursing innovation?

By listening and being supportive. Nurse leaders should offer clinical direction and affirmation. Facilities should have innovation departments that enable employees to develop their ideas.

What leadership insights have you gained during your career?

When moving into the business space, you've got to develop a team. Decide what you want to do and what you want to delegate. When I started CathWear, I had some absolutes: I didn't want to be a salesman or do bookkeeping; I wanted to stay as close to nursing as possible. I partnered with people who excelled at the business side. In addition, let your team members share their ideas and make decisions. This not only helps your team grow, but also builds trust. Your vision needs input to grow. **AN**

Interview by Elizabeth Moore, MFA, a writer at ANA.

Stay up to date on nurse-led innovation at nursingworld.org/innovation.