

# Guest Editor Introduction

## Contributing Author: Kathleen Neal, Ph.D., RN

The ideas for this edition of *The DNA Reporter* came from so many places I've been and experiences I've had in my own professional practice and working with the Delaware Nurses Association during the past years. Some ideas came from attending the Delaware Life Conference during the past few years. I've learned so much about supporting the community of people who manage their lives through challenges and with support from family, friends, and agencies through the State of Delaware and private and community agencies. I've been participating in a workforce group addressing shortages in home care. As an educator, I not only see the need in various care settings but also the opportunities for new nurses to explore their professional advancement. I benefit from being surrounded by the people I worked with through various parts of my career and the very smart people I've learned from during my educational journey.

You will see that this edition has two areas of focus – nurses caring for clients and educating nurses to think about caring for themselves and for clients differently. I'll start with an article by **Janice Selekmán, DNSc, RN, NCSN, FNASN**, Professor Emerita, University of Delaware, who calls on us to rethink the way we consider the health challenges that our clients face and those that we will face. Dr. Selekmán presents language, process, and thought patterns to consider when we work with clients.

**Michelle R. Walls, BSN, RN, CRRN**, who works as a Clinical Educator at Bayhealth South, offers a look at the latest thoughts on the evolution of the Rehabilitation Nursing process. You will find that she presents a model of thinking about individuals, not injury. This is very consistent with the thoughts that Dr. Selekmán presents.

**Karen Nestor, MSN, RN, NCSN**, is a school nurse who works daily with children through a wide range of encounters, from promoting health and wellness to supporting mental

health and providing a safe environment for every child. School nurses also care for students with a variety of disabilities and chronic diseases. Examples include Epilepsy, Cerebral Palsy, Diabetes, ADHD, Asthma, Concussions, Neuromuscular Disease, Anxiety, and many more. School nurses support every child in Delaware in the educational environment.

**Taryn S. Pariag, MSN, RN**, presents some ideas on how to think about Private Duty Nursing (PDN) differently, particularly in caring for those whose life challenges may require more intensive care on an ongoing basis. Not only does Taryn present facts about a career in PDN, but she also raises current challenges in caring for children and families who require nursing to allow their children to live at home, attend school, and allow their families to remain intact. Taryn's work for this edition is the bridge between nursing and nursing education. Not only does she discuss the unique skill set required for PDN, but also the opportunity for Schools of Nursing to take advantage of agencies that provide PDN experiences for nursing students.

We offer two articles regarding education and, more specifically, thinking about those with challenges who chose to pursue a career in nursing. **DeLisa M Cofer, MSN, RN, and Rose Rossi, PhD., MBA, RN**, present a theoretical approach to thinking about how nursing students process successes and challenges in nursing education especially students who have challenges. As we think more broadly about our nursing students, clients, and even ourselves, it's important to be aware of our own assumptions and open to possibilities that we have much to learn. Cofer and Rossi challenge us first to think about building and working in collaborative relations and setting our own assumptions aside.

Finally, **Jennifer S. Graber, EdD, APRN, PMHCNS-BC, and Zachary Jackson, MA**, work specifically with University of Delaware

nursing majors who have accommodations due to academic challenges. They speak about the process of identifying what's available to students, what each student needs, and how to connect the two for a successful student experience in pursuing a nursing degree. Beyond the legal requirements, the program requirements, and the rigor of nursing education, there is value in approaching issues by building trusting relationships between students, support staff, and faculty and providing consistent guidance and support.

I'm so happy to bring you this edition of *The DNA Reporter* and so grateful to all the friends and colleagues who participated in these works. I hope it will expand your knowledge of all the wonderful work being done at all levels on behalf of anyone who has overcome challenges to become a nurse and the work we do to support those who benefit from our efforts. We do good work, Delaware! ■



Dr. Kathy Neal earned her MSN in Nursing Education at Wilmington University and her Ph.D. at Widener University. She is a former Pediatrics nurse and has worked at several local colleges and universities. Dr. Neal holds the title of Assistant Professor of Nursing at Widener University, teaching at the Undergraduate, MSN, and Doctoral levels. She has published in *Research and Theory for Nursing Practice* and is developing additional research in nursing pedagogy. Dr. Neal is a long-standing member of the American Nurses Association and the Delaware Nurses Association and has held several positions with the DNA, including being recently elected President-elect. Dr. Neal can be reached at [kwneal57@gmail.com](mailto:kwneal57@gmail.com)