

EDITORIAL

The Power of Nurses

Barbara Brunt, MA, MN, RN, NE-BC, NPDA-BC® and Yvonne Smith, PhD, APRN-CNS, Co-Editors



The theme for Nurses Week 2025 is “The Power of Nurses.” Power can be defined in many ways. Sepasi et al. (2016) defines power as “something enabling a person or group to achieve goals. consequently giving individuals or groups the potential to change the attitudes or behaviors of others” (p.10). Nurses demonstrate power through many actions including influencing healthcare systems, advocating for patients, championing policy change, and improving population health. Sepasi et al (2016) further describes the power of nursing as extending, “with a fluidlike flowing structure, linked with human values, reaches maturity, and results in outcomes such as improving the quality of care and professional excellence.” (p. 10). Nurses, by using their power to seize opportunities, make a difference in so many ways!

History of Nurses Week

The American Nurses Association (ANA) “History of National Nurses Week” provided the trajectory that eventually resulted in a national recognition, of nurses (ANA, n.d). The first request for a “Nurse Day” was made to President Eisenhower by Dorothy Sutherland of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1953, but the proclamation was never made. In 1954, National Nurse Week was observed from October 11 to 16, which marked the 100th anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s mission to Crimea. A bill introduced in Congress in 1955, and another resolution introduced in 1972 yielded the same result - no federal government action was taken.

In 1975, after the International Council of Nurses (ICN) proclaimed that May

12th would be “International Nurse Day,” President Nixon issued a proclamation designating National Nurse Week. It was not until 1981 that ANA, and various nursing organizations, advocated for May 6th to be a “National Recognition Day for Nurses.” The ANA Board of Directors formally acknowledged May 6, 1982, as “National Nurses Day.” Eight years later, in 1990, the ANA Board of Directors expanded the recognition of nurses to a weeklong celebration, declaring May 6-12, National Nurses Week. Finally, in 1993, the ANA Board of Directors designated May 6-12 as permanent dates to observe National Nurses week beginning in 1994 and in all subsequent years.

Robinson (2024) recommended four focus areas for honoring nurses. These areas include self-care, recognition, professional development, and community engagement. This editorial will expand on each area and offer suggestions for celebrating nursing.

Self-Care

As nurses, we often focus so much on caring for others that we do not take care of ourselves. Nurses experience health issues, burnout, and turnover due to the increasing demands of the job. Olenick (2022) identified strategies to address nurse well-being, focusing the program on seven categories: physical, social, intellectual, financial, emotional, occupational, and spiritual health. Strategies employed to support nurses included making compensation adjustments, providing support personnel to help nurses, and piloting a virtual remote nursing model. Consider what strategies you can employ to take better care of yourself

and strengthen your well-being.

Recognition

This issue recognizes individuals who received awards in 2024 and celebrates ANA-Ohio committee and special interest group (SIG) accomplishments. Implementing meaningful nurse recognition in the workplace fosters a culture that focuses on appreciation, helps boost team morale, and enhances job satisfaction, which leads to better patient care and outcomes. ANA (2023) identified several ways to show nurses you appreciate their commitment. These included:

- Celebrate milestones and achievements,
- Compensate nurses for their hard work,
- Provide developmental opportunities,
- Instill a positive work/life balance,
- Write a personalized note of recognition,
- Create a peer-to-peer recognition program, and
- Send flowers, balloons, or other gifts of thanks.

Professional Development

The healthcare environment and the practice of nursing are continually changing to improve patient experience and health outcomes. Nurses must keep pace with these many changes. Participating in continuing professional development programs in nursing is one way to stay current. ANA-Ohio offers free continuing education (CE) programs for its members and at low cost to non-members, on a variety of topics. These continuing education programs include pharmacology for advanced practice registered nurses

(APRNs), who need advanced pharmacology contact hours to maintain their licensure. In addition to CE opportunities at places of employment, many organizations provide tuition assistance for nurses wanting to pursue additional education. Take advantage of these opportunities to continue your professional development.

Community Engagement

There are many ways that nurses can get involved in their community and in the legislative arena. Earlier this year ANA-Ohio implemented its first ANA-Ohio Policy Bootcamp to prepare participants to advocate for and influence policy decisions. The program comprises didactic and clinical components, including structured trips to the statehouse in Columbus to interact with legislators and see policymakers at work first-hand.

Cleveland and colleagues (2019) outlined opportunities for nurses to impact healthcare quality and access and to lead change. Nurses play a vital role in healthcare reform as care management and coordination leaders. The shift to population health has allowed nurses to use their skills within integrated healthcare teams. Nurses must use their education to advance access, prevention, and wellness for all populations and all socio-economic groups. Having nurses practice to the full extent of their education and licensure can help improve access to

care. In states where advanced practice nurses practice with full authority, nurse practitioners reduced costs by 11% to 29% and improved quality and access through the provision of care in various settings (Perloff et al., 2015). "The time is ripe for nurses to harness the power of a unique disciplinary perspective and enduring patient trust to advocate for the advancement of policy and continuation of quality research, evidence-based initiatives, and patient centered innovation (Cleveland et al., 2019). Explore ways you can become more involved in your community and the legislative arena.

Conclusion

As you celebrate Nurses Week, focus on and celebrate the accomplishments of your nursing colleagues who continue to positively impact patient outcomes. Take a moment to acknowledge the difference you make and recognize the significant accomplishments of your team. Think about your value to the patients you serve, the individuals with whom you work, and the community in which you live. We can all celebrate the power of nurses! ■

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