



tration, 2023) and despite advancements, remains a significant health burden on the state's healthcare system further highlighting the need for improved access, resources, and policies. The life expectancy

of people with SCD in the United States is significantly lower than the general population, with an average of 52.6 years for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries compared to 76 years for those without the condition (Joao et al., 2023). We of course have experienced this first-hand as a mother, leader in the community, and an emergency room nurse of over 30 years died at 60 years of age when it was mistaken that she had the trait (which was shrugged off in the emergency room) when in fact she had the disease. So this June and every month after, go forth with kindness, empathy, and a desire to learn more about illnesses that you may not entirely understand and accept that science is constantly changing; what you may not

know now might be something that is life altering for someone's care in the future. ■

**References online:**  
[myamericannurse.com/?p=418156](https://myamericannurse.com/?p=418156)

**Biography :** The Hyacinth Scarlett Foundation (HSF) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to serving communities. Founded in honor of Hyacinth Scarlett who was a Florida registered nurse who died of sickle cell disease in 2021, the Foundation's mission is to continue Hyacinth's legacy through charitable programs that sustain her lifelong commitment to underserved communities, and the advancement of music and health (particularly in nursing) education. Submitted with permission on behalf of the HSF Board of Directors by the HSF Board Chairman and FNA member Marie Smith-East, PhD, DNP, PMHNP-BC.

## The Power of Kindness: A Bedside Nurse's Role in Healing

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In the whirlwind of hospital alarms, rapid responses, and medical procedures, it is easy to forget that healing is not just about science, it is also about human connection. As bedside nurses, we are more than caregivers. It is our reassuring voices and compassionate presence that transforms a sterile hospital room into a place

of comfort and hope.

In the face of suffering, kindness is our most powerful intervention. It cannot be prescribed in a chart, yet its effects are profound. Empathy is the difference between a patient feeling like a number and feeling seen, valued, and cared for. When we approach kindness and empa-

thy with intentionality, we do much more than save lives – we touch hearts, restore dignity, and make the hardest moments a little softer.

Kindness is not just an emotional gesture; it has measurable physiological benefits. Research shows that acts of compassion reduce cortisol levels, lower blood pressure, and boost immune function. A gentle touch, a warm smile, or a few extra moments spent listening can ease pain, reduce anxiety, and promote a faster recovery for the patients that have trusted us with their care. Given the measurable outcomes associated with kindness and empathy, I urge nurses to actively cultivate these skills and ensure they are consistently present in your work. Our patients may forget the specific interventions we did for them, but they will never forget the way we made them feel.



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## **A Ripple Effect: Transforming Healthcare One Moment at a Time**

Kindness is contagious. A kind nurse does not just change a patient's experience; they inspire those around them. Families witnessing a nurse's compassion feel heard, respected, and comforted. Above all, when patients and families experience a culture of empathy, kindness, and caring, they know that their loved ones will be properly cared for. Just as we likely prioritize safety measures (like bedrails, fall interventions, and patient identification), I encourage you to prioritize intentional conversations with your patients and their families.

When healthcare professionals engage with empathy, they build trust, which is essential for effective healing and recovery. Small gestures, like listening actively or offering words of reassurance, have the power to transform a patient's experience, leaving them with a sense of comfort and hope. In turn, this ripple effect extends beyond the individual interaction, influencing the entire healthcare setting and creating a culture of compassion that resonates with everyone involved.

## **Why Our Role Matters More Than Ever**

The world often measures success in data, outcomes, and efficiency. But in nursing, our true success is measured in the silent moments. Yes, our tangible outcomes are certainly valuable, but as we strategize tactics to elevate the patient's experience, these efforts almost always come back to the most valuable aspects of care—the human connections we cultivate. When we prioritize meaningful interactions, we not only enhance satisfaction and comfort but also foster an environment where trust, respect, and compassion are at the core of every patient encounter.

The bedside nurse is the heart of healthcare. We have the power to shape experiences, lift spirits, and make hospitals feel less like institutions and more like places of healing. In a profession built on science, kindness is what makes the difference between treating a patient and truly caring for them.

So, let us remember: Kindness is not an extra step—it is the step that matters most. I encourage you to capitalize on the opportunity to exhibit empathy and kindness towards our patients and families, as these moments of connection can be just as healing as the treatments we provide. Every interaction is an opportunity to make a difference, and through kindness, we can transform the way people experience care. At the end of the day, it is not just about what we do, it is about how we make people feel. This is the ultimate nursing super-power. ■

**AUTHOR BIO:** Parker Brigrance is a member of the Florida Nurses Association and serves as the Director of the Emergency Service Line at Baptist Health in Jacksonville, Florida. In his role at Baptist Health, he oversees the strategic growth of the ED service line. With over a decade of nursing experience, he is passionate about clinician development, improving healthcare quality, and enhancing the patient experience.