

LEGENDARY LEADER:

Mary Seacole

Carol OMeara, RN, MS

This quarter, we continue a series of articles from the Colorado Nurses Foundation honoring the legacy of nursing leaders who have defied racism and paved the way for underrepresented nurses. In February 2026, the Watson Caring Institute Newsletter carried a wonderful tribute to Mary Seacole. They have graciously given us permission to reprint it here.

In honor of Black History Month, we celebrate the legacy of Mary Seacole (1805 - 1881), a true pioneer of holistic care and a beacon of resilience for nurse advocates everywhere. Long before modern medicine embraced the "whole person" approach, Seacole was integrating hygiene, ventilation, hydration, and herbal remedies with deep emotional empathy at her "British Hotel" during the Crimean War. Despite facing systemic racism and being repeatedly denied official nursing roles, she remained undeterred,



Credit: Smithsonian Magazine

proving that the heart of nursing lies in the commitment to the patient rather than the permission of an institution.

The Colorado Nurses Foundation joins the Watson Caring Institute in honoring Mary Seacole, a true Legendary Leader. ■

PHN SECTION ARTICLE

Colorado Nurse February Edition 2026

2025-2026 Update: Colorado Public Health Association (CPHA) Public Health Nurse (PHN) Section

"Notes from the Field" Colorado Public Health Association - Public Health Nurse Section

The Public Health Nurses (PHNs) in 2026 are facing serious challenges to their ability to deliver core public health services care to every citizen in their communities as established by the 2008 Public Health Act. Currently the state and federal changes to funding for public health and health care for those who are impacted by the social determinants of health and other complex economic situations has seriously impacted staffing and operations in local public health departments (LPHDs). They are faced with addressing the confusion and misinformation regarding immunizations, access to care and more. They are acutely aware of the need to work collaboratively with other health care providers, nursing organizations and specialties to deliver the best health care possible

and achieve positive health outcomes.

We are excited to announce that the Public Health Nurse Section (PHNS) voted to remain an Affiliate organization with the Colorado Nurses Association. PHNS will also become an Affiliate organization to the Association of Public Health Nurses (APHN, www.phnurse.org). This will assure that PHNs are connected and committed to building strong networks and a unified voice for nursing locally and nationally. Membership to APHN will enhance their ability to assure a competent workforce with a national focus on education, advocacy and commitment to equity, inclusion, fairness and respect. Affiliate status in both nursing organizations will increase nurses ability to advocate for health care policy issues in Colorado and nationally impacting our nursing practice.

Upcoming PHN activities will include celebration of annual Public Health Week,

April 6-12, focusing on strengthening the systems, science, and community partnerships that keep us healthy. This year's Public Health in the Rockies conference is being held in Keystone, September 22nd - 24th, entitled "Stronger Together."

Please reach out to the PHNS to connect, collaborate or join us for a meeting. The incoming President is Rebecca Miles, BSN, RN, who started her nursing career in 2004 and has over 18 years in local public health with Arapahoe County Public Health. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the DNP-MPH program, CU Anschutz College of Nursing. Rebecca currently serves as a Nurse Educator with the Arapahoe County Immunization Program. You can reach Rebecca at rmiles@arapahoegov.org ■

Respectfully submitted by: Rita Beam MS, RN, Public Health Nurse Consultant, Liaison PHN Section for CNA