This Week Is National Nurses Week!

Happy National Nurses Week! This week is a time to celebrate the important role nurses play in health care and to recognize, honor, and thank nurses for all they do. It’s celebrated annually from May 6, National Nurses Day, through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) (n.d.) reports that a National Nurse Day was first observed in 1954, the year which marked the 100th anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s mission to treat wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. In 1974, the International Council of Nurses (ICN) established May 12, Nightingale's birthday, as an annual "International Nurse Day." It wasn't until the early 1990s that recognition of nurses' contributions to community and national health was expanded to a week-long event each year during the week of May 6-12 (American Nurses Association, n.d.).

The ANA's theme for 2018 is Inspire, Innovate, Influence. Nurses do these things when caring for patients and interacting with colleagues. Some of them do so on the national level as well, through organization and committee work. Here are a few examples of how nurses inspire, innovate, and influence colleagues and patients and their care.

How You Inspire — Nurses motivate, stimulate, and encourage patients everyday. You do this whenever you talk a patient into getting out of bed despite their pain, teach self-care that you know the patient can accomplish, or offer a smile of encouragement. Although you may not hear it often, you also impress patients' families as you skillfully and compassionately care for their loved ones.

Lisa Bonsall, nurse and Senior Clinical Editor for Lippincott Nursing Center, says that nurses inspire each other to do their best work, to keep learning, to use best practices based on latest evidence, to improve outcomes by working cooperatively with other disciplines, and to be leaders on committees and in nursing organizations (Lippincott Nursing Center, 2018).

How You Innovate — Nurses invent, update, and transform when the need arises. You do this when you seek out and use current best practices while providing safe, quality care to your patients. Getting involved in research is another way you can be a part of the transformation of your profession.

Karen Innocent, nurse and Executive Director of Continuing Education at Wolters Kluwer Health, believes that innovation happens when nurses use science, evidence, and creativity to implement changes which improve nursing practice. She says that innovation doesn’t have to involve technology; it can be as simple as incorporating a new way of doing something found in a journal article or learned at a conference that allows you to improve nursing practice (Lippincott Nursing Center, 2018).

How You Influence — Nurses guide, impact, and persuade not only patients but coworkers and the profession itself. You have the ability and power to guide and affect the course of events in a patient’s care and their actions and thoughts about their disease, it’s management, and their recovery.

Anne Dabrow Woods, Chief Nurse at Wolters Kluwer, reports that nurses are the largest group of professionals globally, and as such they have an opportunity to influence quality health care improvements and the use of evidence in decision making. She feels that nurses can and need to be a voice for culture change and health care policy reform (Lippincott Nursing Center, 2018).

In these and many ways, nurses are a part of the inspiration, innovation, and influence behind improving patient care and nursing practices. Hondros College of Nursing recognizes and appreciates the invaluable work that you do in the prevention of illness and injury and in the promotion of education, health, safety, and well-being. We’re thankful you have chosen to join this valued and respected profession, and we appreciate that you have chosen to learn and teach with us! Happy Nurses Week!

References:

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Phone: Direct: 513.644.6020 OR 1-855-906.8773, ext. 6020
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