

Celebrating “The Year of the Nurse and Midwife”: The Why’s and Wherefore’s

Overview

These are unprecedented times that the entire world is experiencing, however, nurses and midwives are at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis.

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that 2020 is “The Year of the Nurse and Midwife.” WHO designated 2020 as such to coincide with the 200th Anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth (birth date is May 12, 1820 – her legacy teaches about the tremendous impact of early intervention and preventive healthcare); the release of the first “State of the World’s Nursing Report” by WHO (to take place in May 2020); the culmination of the three-year “Nursing Now” campaign (a collaboration of WHO and the International Council of Nurses that was championed by Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge). WHO also made the designation to acknowledge that nurses make up the majority of the worldwide healthcare force, and are usually the front line of care. Nurses and midwives comprise more than 50% of the shortfall of global health workers through 2030. Supporting nurses and midwives opens doors and boosts economic growth and gender equality.

Simply put, nurses are the “bridge” of healthcare, linking people in the community with the healthcare system.

On May 6, 2020, the United States will officially observe “National Nurses Day” and “The Year of the Nurse and Midwife.” This day presents the opportunity for all of NJPCA members to recognize, in solidarity, nurses at all levels – Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Midwives, License Practical Nurses and Nurse Leaders. This day presents a rare opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank our nurses and the many contributions they continue to make for the health and well-being of our communities.

This is the time to bring healthcare humans together. Over the last few decades, the field of Nursing has grown, nursing shifts have changed and nurses can work flexible hours that fit their personal lives. Wherever healthcare is provided, a nurse is needed. Being reminded that nurses are always on the frontline, they are the critical link between the community they serve and as the navigator for many complicated issues. No more paper charts but now through electronic health records, assisting the provider, educating patients, addressing social determinates of health, understanding quality assurance, and much more. Nurses are talented and gifted.

Goals

- To establish a platform that enables NJPCA, and its members, the ability to educate the community (general population, elected officials, local leaders) about the important and specific roles nurses and midwives play in our communities.
- To publicly acknowledge and publicize the important and often life-saving contributions of nurses and midwives in our communities. (Each week, highlight an individual nurse, midwife or group of nurses and midwives.)

Objectives

- Solicit and utilize stories and anecdotes that illustrate how nurses and midwives provide essential care – often in challenging conditions – and are commonly the primary point of healthcare contact for people in local communities.
- Solicit and utilize information on nurses’ diverse contributions to health centers.
- Solicit and utilize testimonials from patients of the care they received from nurses and midwives and the positive affects that care has had in their lives.
- Create and build a nursing network for sharing best practices and providing support from healthcare centers and providers.
- Provide accolades and acknowledgement to individual nurses and midwives and teams of nurses.
- Create and utilize vehicles for publicizing the roles and contributions of nurses and midwives in our communities via press releases, social media, newsletters, and awards (depending upon available funds).

Possible End Products

- Establishment of Nursing-focused Support and Networking Meetings by NJPCA
- Holding a one-day conference to highlight nursing innovations
- Developing and publicizing a “Nurses’ Community Health Center list with the services nurses and midwives provide at each
- Finding and publicizing the availability of Nursing-focused webinars
- Reviewing/Developing Community Health Center RN/LPN Nursing Curriculum

Potential Benefits (Outcomes)

- Adding joy to the workplace – “Joy in Work”
- Developing a strong pipeline for our current and future nursing workforce
- Providing opportunities for positive media coverage

Next Steps

- Reviewing nursing shortages throughout the country and developing strategies that will help improve outlook and care.
- Motivating the younger generation to pursue a career in nursing.
- Establishing May 6, 2020 as the one day all NJPCA centers will observe and celebrate “National Nurses Day” and “The Year of the Nurse and Midwife.” Developing and implementing plans and programs for that day.