



U.S. Public Health Service Nursing
Chief Nurse Officer's Newsletter
RADM Kerry Paige Nesseler
March 2012



Dear PHS Civilian, Tribal, and Commissioned Corps Nurses,

Hello to all the nurses! Sunny days ahead....spring season is just around the corner and that means 'March Madness' for those who are basketball fans. For the nurses stationed in the D.C. area, 20 March – 27 April 2012, marks the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Centennial Celebration. This once-in-a-lifetime celebration will be an unprecedented, 5-week spectacular 100th anniversary acknowledging and highlighting the 1912 incredible gift of 3,000 cherry trees to the city of Washington, D.C. from the city of Tokyo, Japan. Held on the Monument Grounds/Tidal Basin, this would be a great weekend outing to see how this gift has withstood the test of time!

On a more serious note, the month of March recognizes National Women's History Month and this year's theme is "Women's Education – Women Empowerment" promoting equal opportunity for education, training, and scholarships. In addition, March also highlights "National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day". This day is meant for individuals and organizations across the country to increase the overall knowledge of HIV/AIDS among women and girls and improve access to care.

We have many exciting initiatives planned this year, including the roll-out of the implementation phase for the PHS Nursing Strategic Plan as well as stimulating agendas for both Nurse Recognition Day (NRD) and the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium-Nurse Category Day.

I look forward to working alongside you in 2012 to carry out the missions of the Department, Corps, and the National Prevention Strategy by creating healthy and safe communities, expanding clinical and community-based preventive services, empowering people to make healthy choices, and eliminating health disparities.

Past Conferences & Meetings:

Federal Nursing Service Council (FNCS)

The Federal Nursing Service Council (FNCS) met on Thursday, 19 January 2012, for our bi-monthly meeting. The Council is composed of the Chief Nurse Officers from the U.S. Public Health Service, the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the American Red Cross and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS). In the meeting we identified and discussed common nursing issues and challenges that exist within each service as well as the nursing profession. Processes and outcomes to tackle these issues/challenges have been developed and leads/champions from each service have been selected. Three workgroups have been formed and, on behalf of the PHS, I will be the lead for the "Influence and Collaboration" Workgroup. LT Stacey McBryde is our key resource as we develop a website for the FNCS. CAPTs Amy Anderson, Michelle Dunwoody, Susan Orsega, and Sylvia Trent-Adams have volunteered to be the USPHS representatives for the other two workgroups (Role Clarification and Culture of Inquiry). Our dear past Chief Nurse Officer, RADM (ret) Carol Romano, Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, USUHS, is leading the effort for the "Role Clarification" Workgroup. What a treat for all of us to work alongside this nurse champion!

Robert Wood Johnson Forum (RWJF) on Future of Public Health Nursing

In support of the Future of Nursing Report, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation sponsored a forum on the Future of Public Health Nursing on 7-8 February 2012, at the RWJF Headquarters, Princeton, NJ. RWJF organized this forum to gain valuable information from PHN leaders in practice, education, and research. Topics discussed included new foundations for the future of public health nursing, including the QUAD Council Strategic Priorities, the Core Competencies for Public Health Nursing, and the Scope and Standards of Public Health Nursing. I provided the federal response on the PHN Practice Panel. Dr. Patricia Drehoobl from CDC discussed the scientific education and professional development program. From my perspective, the emerging roles and opportunities for public health nurses are fivefold:

- Expanded roles for nursing in the Affordable Care Act; importance of primary care practitioners and increased coverage for Americans;
- Opportunities from Health Professional Workforce Development and Practice;
- Nursing's important contributions to the National Prevention Strategy;
- Importance of Global Health on nursing practice;
- And, of course, the recommendations from the 2010 IOM-RWJF Report on "The Future of Nursing."

Community Health and Service Missions (CHASM) of Health Disparities in Underserved Communities: An Action Plan for Federal Agency and Community Coordination

Bridging the CHASM of Health Disparities in Underserved Communities: An Action Plan for Federal Agency and Community Coordination: CHASM = Community Health and Service Missions. The Office of the Surgeon General and Office of Force Readiness and Deployment held a Federal Agency Collaboration meeting on 7 February in Washington, D.C. The purpose of CHASM and of the strategic planning meeting was to:

- 1) Bridge the chasm of health disparities, protect the health of all Americans, and provide essential human services for those who are least able to help themselves;
- 2) Increase the skills of the country's public health workforce by better enabling it to execute an effective response to disasters and emergencies;
- 3) Promote scientific knowledge;
- 4) Make demonstrable progress;
- 5) Reduce health disparities in relation to ethnicity, geography, and socioeconomics;
- 6) Support the 2011 HHS Action Plan to Reduce Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities; and
- 7) Reinforce the ACA focus on prevention.

CAPT Kimberly Elenberg is spearheading this effort for the Corps. More information will follow on the outcomes and next steps.

Federal Public Health Service Nurse Leadership Network

The Federal Public Health Service Nurse Leadership Network meeting convened for the fourth time on Thursday, 9 February 2012, 8:00am – 12:30pm here at the Parklawn Building, Rockville, MD. This group is comprised of all the chief nurses throughout PHS, including agencies within HHS and beyond, and the NPAC leadership. The purpose of the Network is to provide a unified federal public health nursing forum that facilitates shared communication focused on innovation and collaborative approaches to improve the health and safety of the Nation. Dr. Mary Wakefield, HRSA Administrator, provided opening remarks. Dr. Yvonne Bryan, Special Assistant to NIH, NINR Director; Dr. Clare Hastings, Chief Nurse of the NIH Clinical Center; Ms. Jeannie Miller, Deputy Director of Clinical Standards Group, CMS; Dr. Julie Sochalski, Director of the Division of Nursing, HRSA; CAPT Michelle Dunwoody, Chief Nurse BOP; CAPT Philip Jarres, Chief Nurse IHSC; and CAPT Tina Tah and Mr. Frank Saenz, IHS representatives, provided updates on each of their agencies. A big thanks to CDRs Mary Brooks and Madelyn Reyes for taking minutes of the meeting.

PHS Nursing All-Hands Meeting

The PHS Nursing All-Hands Meeting took place on Thursday, 9 February 2012, 2:00pm – 4:00pm EST, in the Parklawn Building. In addition to the CPO update on the Nursing Strategic Plan, RADM Scott Giberson, Director, Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness (DCCPR), presented on topics such as DCCPR policies, recent Commissioned Corps Application Process Change: Focus on Existing Applicant Pool, and other relevant topics. Three nurse officers, LCDRs Mary Brooks, Stefanie Glenn, and LT Christine Collins, who were recently deployed to assist with the Public Health Emergency in the IHS Aberdeen, MD area, shared their extraordinary experience with this type of specific clinical and health systems strengthening deployment to rural, underserved populations.

NPAC Retreat

The NPAC Retreat was held on Friday, 10 February 2012, 8:30am – 3:45pm, in the Parklawn Building. Ms. Gillian Morgan, Senior Executive, Kaiser Permanente Office, Bethesda, Maryland, was the guest speaker. She engaged the audience in activities to portray our leadership and team member styles. Ms. Morgan is a dynamic speaker with over 15 years experience in this field working in a variety of different industries including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and private practice. My congratulations to CAPT Orsega and CDR Hunter-Thomas for coordinating a successful retreat!

PHS Federal Public Health Service Nursing Strategic Plan – Implementation Phase

Under the leadership of CDR Amy Webb, the implementation phase for our PHS Federal Public Health Service Nursing Strategic Plan has begun. The team will be presenting an implementation plan, including communication, data collection, and surveillance strategies by the end of May. We'll begin to collect specific nursing activities to support the goals/objectives and link to prevention outcome measures. The prevention focus areas are a healthy heart, healthy eating, tobacco cessation, and mental/behavioral health outcomes. A summary will be provided at the USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium in June. Thank you to all the nurses who have agreed to contribute to the development and implementation of this very important next step.

Upcoming Conferences and Meetings:

21st Annual USPHS Nursing Recognition Day will be held on **4 May 2012**, at Natcher Auditorium, NIH Campus, NIH Building 45, Bethesda, MD. The theme is *“Nursing on the Forefront: United in Health”*.

The **2012 USPHS Scientific and Training Symposium** will be held **19-21 June 2012**, at the University of Maryland, College Park, in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The theme for the conference is **"Prevention Strategies for a Healthy Nation: Building on the Basics of Public Health."** Nurse Category Day will be 21 June.

The **118th Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS) Meeting** is scheduled for **11-16 November 2012**, in Phoenix, AZ.

Spotlight on PHS Nurses and others:

Please join me in congratulating these nurses for their exceptional leadership and accomplishments!

Recently, one of our own Nurse Officers, CAPT Linda Jo Belsito, who is assigned to the FDA, promoted the PHS Nursing Strategic Plan, which is aligned with the National Prevention Strategy, by providing a weight lifting demonstration for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). She demonstrated lift variations such as the Olympic Lifts--Snatch, and Clean and Jerk. In addition, 2 of 11 of the Special Olympic Athletes whom she coaches, also provided a demonstration of the “Deadlift”, which is one of the competitive Powerlifts.

So as you can see, it is possible to incorporate the National Prevention Strategy (NPS) into your daily routine and I sincerely hope that each and every one of you will follow CAPT Belsito's example and find a way to promote the NPS. Our Nursing Strategic Plan's implementation phase will provide all of us a strategy and

place to share our nursing activities and initiatives. This will enable us to document nurses unique contributions in achieving the NPS goals.

Some photos taken during the demonstration:



CAPT Linda Jo Belsito and student

News pertaining to Commissioned Corps Nurse Officers:

Calls to Active Duty - Throughout 2011, USPHS has received many inquiries for career opportunities with the Commissioned Corps. DCCPR is currently working with over 1,200 applicants in various stages of the application process. For comparison, our calls-to-active duty in any given year has been approximately 500. To manage the current volume of applications amidst organizational and process changes, DCCPR will focus their efforts on professions, groups, and positions of identified need.

Beginning 1 January 2012, and until further notice, the Commissioned Corps will only accept new application packets for the following professions and groups:

- Physicians and Dentists
- CDC EIS candidates forwarded to USPHS from the Agency
- IHS Pharmacy Residency candidates that have been forwarded from the Agency
- USUHS candidates forwarded to USPHS from the program
- DoD Wounded Warrior Initiative applicants (psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurse practitioners and licensed clinical social workers)
- Student programs (i.e. Jr. and Sr. COSTEP)

Please note this is not a “pause” as DCCPR will continue with the Call to Active Duty Process, with the specific professions and groups previously mentioned having first priority. And, of the 1,200 applicants, approximately 400 are nurse applicants. So, yes indeed, we will be commissioning new nurses into the Corps. And, in light of the Affordable Care Act, I will be emphasizing the critical role that registered nurses, primary care nurse practitioners, and doctoral prepared nurses play in the achievement of our goals of eliminating health disparities and creating a stronger, healthier nation.

Billets Transformation - The Office of Commissioned Corps Operations began the roll-out of standardized, category-specific billets for our category in September 2010. On 26 January 2012, the nurse clinical billets were completed, approved by agency liaisons, Nurse Rapid Responders, CAPT Amy Anderson, and myself, and were submitted to CAPT Bailey to be finalized. As of 24 February 2012, the nursing category specific billets have been completed and approved. I wish to thank CAPTs Bailey, Anderson, and all the Nurse Rapid Responders for their leadership and diligence in assisting a smooth transition for the Clinical Billet Collection Process.

Global Health Awards - The Personnel Operations Memorandum (POM) for the Global Health Awards have been released. Please go to the CCMIS website and review the POMs to determine your eligibility.

Women’s Issue in the Commissioned Corps Advisory Board – The Women’s Advisory Board is set to convene and will seek to identify and analyze key issues that impact women in the Corps and develop an action plan to address the issues. RADM Kweder and CAPT Lane have been appointed Co-chairs for the advisory board.

Utility Uniform – New utility uniforms for the PHS are being discussed. Currently, the woodland camouflage Battle Dress Uniform is the deployment uniform, but DoD no longer supports this uniform. A Uniform Advisory Committee was formed to make recommendations about a new utility uniform. The committee suggested that the PHS use the U.S. Coast Guard Operational Dress Uniform (ODU) as the utility uniform with the appropriate PHS insignia. If the Coast Guard uniform is approved, the uniforms will have a one year phase-in period. *No action recommended until final determination and further notice.

Basic Readiness Status from 31 December 2011 -- Preliminary data showed the overall Corps at 90% Basic Ready. Unfortunately, the nurses did not reach the top 3 categories this time--Dental was #1, Therapist #2, and HSO #3. If you were deemed “not basic ready” by OFRD, believe this is in error, and can validate your records were submitted by 31 December 2011, please contact OFRD and confirm your status. The next Basic Readiness run is scheduled for 31 March 2012.

Recent Reports and Programs:

IOM: The Institute of Medicine published "*Measuring Progress in Obesity Prevention - Workshop Report*," on Feb. 23, 2012. The IOM formed the Committee on Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention to review the IOM's past obesity-related recommendations, identify a set of recommendations for future action, and recommend indicators of progress in implementing these actions. The committee held a workshop in March 2011 about how to improve measurement of progress in obesity prevention.

IOM - The Institute of Medicine is joining Home Box Office (HBO) cable network, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, and Kaiser Permanente in developing "The Weight of the Nation," a new national campaign tackling the obesity crisis.

"The Weight of the Nation" will shed new light on the facts and myths of this urgent public health issue and explore how obesity is impacting the nation and the health care system. This multipronged project will feature a series of four documentary films, a three-part HBO Family series, 14 bonus short films, a social media campaign, a companion book, and a nationwide community-based outreach campaign. The four-part documentary series will air 14-15 May 2012. The other facets of the initiative were developed with expert input from IOM, as well as CDC and NIH.

In conjunction with the project, IOM will publish a new report funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that will review progress made so far to implement strategies to curb obesity and recommend selected actions aimed at accelerating progress in the near future. The report's recommendations will serve as scientifically grounded guidance to community groups, policymakers, and other concerned individuals and organizations seeking to implement obesity prevention strategies locally and at the national level.

Past studies by IOM and others have shown that obesity is not simply a failure of personal responsibility and that combating it demands action at all levels, from the individual and the family, to communities, and to the nation as a whole. IOM is also working with the collaborating organizations to develop action kits that will provide tools to help community-based groups take steps to prevent obesity.

CMS: The Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) announce it will partner with Text4Baby, a free national health texting service, to promote enrollment in both Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and provide pregnant women and new mothers free text messages on important health care issues. The announcement is part of activities marking the anniversaries of both the signing of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA) and the launch of Text4Baby, whose partners include Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Voxiva, which provides the mobile health platforms, and a host of wireless carriers. Organizations across the country are using the CHIPRA and Text4Baby anniversaries to highlight how access to both health coverage and health information is critical for families. Activities are already taking place in locations in California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma and others. More than 184,000 current Text4Baby users are receiving a new message alerting them to the availability of free and low-cost health coverage through Medicaid and CHIP. The message will provide a connection to the InsureKidsNow phone number and website for information about how to sign up. Additional messages will be periodically texted to provide Text4Baby users information about the importance of prenatal visits for women and the value of health coverage for keeping children healthy and getting the care they need when they're sick.

Commissioned Corps Nurse Officer Long-Term Training for Nurse Anesthesia - This is a short notice for Long-Term Training for Commissioned Corps Nurse Officers interested in long-term training to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. Commissioned Corps Nurses from any agency are eligible to apply. The Division of Nursing Services of the Indian Health Service will fund one admitted applicant to the Uniformed Services University, Graduated School of Nursing. Please forward to all tribally managed hospital facilities and Indian Health Services Hospitals and clinics and to all agencies of the Public Health Service who have clinical nurses. If you have questions, please contact CAPT Buck Frost by e-mail at bmfrost@anthc.org.

Thank you for your incredible work and service to our nation! Nurses are #1

Sincerely, Kerry

RADM Kerry Paige Nesseler

Assistant Surgeon General
Chief Nurse Officer, USPHS
