

A Message From the Chief Nurse

Nurses,

Summer is upon us! I trust that you will find some time for relaxation and refueling at this midpoint of the year. We continue to advance our mission and march forward. Here are some updates to keep you informed.

Policy

The new uniform policy that requires all Corps officers to wear the uniform daily while on official duty became effective July 1, 2008. You can find the new policy as outlined in CC26.3.2 "Required Wear of the Uniform" on the CCMIS web site http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/CCPM26_3_2.pdf

Give visibility to the mission and values of the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps as you proudly wear our uniform.

Quality Principles for Public Health practice in the US Public Health Service have been developed and can be found in the July issue of the Commissioned Corps Bulletin on the web at http://dcp.psc.gov/cbulletin/articles/CCBulletin_07_2008.aspx

Transformation

The new directive is for the Corps to increase its active duty force strength to 6,600 officers by 2012, with an interim FY08 target of 6,150 officers. Improvements have been made in recruitment, sizing and system infrastructure of the Corp. These are the three pillars for transformation efforts. Our applicant numbers have tripled and the average application processing time has been cut in half. The two-week PHS Officer Basic course (OBC) has become the standard training activity for officers following their calls to active duty. Over 450 officers have received their introduction to the Corps through this course. A supervisor awareness program, a new officer profile video and virtual tours of an IHS and a BOP facility are also in development. As of today, we have 6181 officers on extended active duty including 1416 nurses. Keep up the good work of recruiting!

Leadership and Outreach

I had the opportunity to participate in the World Health Organization (WHO) Government Chief Nurse Forum with 300 nurse leaders from 90 different countries. The Forum was directed to address a global program of work for scaling up nursing and midwifery to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The WHO priorities were addressed as well as examples of best practices in partnership. Our lessons learned from Katrina were shared as an example of nurses responding to climate change events. A triad meeting of the Government Chief Nurses, professional nursing organization leadership and regulatory bodies in nursing was also held to increase dialogue and collaboration in integrating these efforts. In the US we will continue this dialogue with the President of the American Nurses Association and the President of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

I did several media interviews to respond to questions about the role of the Chief Nurse in the Public Health Service and about the Commissioned Corps. These can be found in the 2008 March issue of RN, the May/June Syllabus newsletter of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, and the June issue of The American Nurse Today. I also encourage each of you to look for opportunities to talk about the work you do as nurses in public health.

I spoke at the annual conference of the National Association of School Nurses in New Mexico about the Surgeon General's initiative on Healthy Youths for a Healthy Future. I acknowledge the valuable role that school nurses play in helping to keep our children healthy and prevent them from becoming overweight. Information on this initiative can be found at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/obesityprevention/index.html>

Consider reaching out to share the Surgeon General's initiatives with your colleagues and in your communities.

Career Development

The 2008 Public Health Scientific Training Symposium was held in Tucson, Arizona, with over 1,000 participants from the Corps and private sectors. The nurse category day was a huge success and a tribute to the planning leadership efforts of CDRs Dustin Rider and Christina West. We extend kudos to all the nurses who gave outstanding presentations. We look forward to the 2009 conference in Atlanta, Georgia at the Marquis Marriott on June 1-4, 2009. Plan your calendar to attend.

The Joint Commission Announces 2009 National Patient Safety Goals. Go to <http://www.jointcommission.org> for the specific National Patient Safety Goals for each of The Joint Commission's accreditation and certification programs: Ambulatory Care and Office-Based Surgery, Behavioral Health Care, Hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals, Disease-Specific Care, Home Health, Long Term Care, and Laboratories.

On June 16-17, 2008 a Surgeon General's Conference on pre-term birth was held to increase awareness of this important issue. This problem is a complicated one and poses difficult research and public health issues, in part because the causes are multifactorial. The Office of the Surgeon General and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development invited national experts in medical, nursing, public health, public policy, and community sectors to collaborate on strategies aimed at preventing pre-term birth. A report will be provided to the Secretary to submit to Congress as well as be made available to the public. The video cast of the conference is available at <http://videocast.nih.gov/PastEvents>.

Congratulations to those who were approved for temporary promotions this cycle. The assimilation and permanent promotions will be announced soon as well. Counseling will be offered to those who were in the lower quartile or who the Chief Nurse Officer identifies in order to provide focused career development information. Forty senior nurse officers have agreed to serve as counselors and I applaud their leadership in serving their colleagues. I remind everyone to check the category professional indicators (benchmarks)

to evaluate your own career progression. The 2009 benchmarks will be very similar to those in 2008.

Recognition

We celebrate the contributions of all nurses and specifically acknowledge the following who received awards this year.

Mable May Wagner Award For Clinical Practice Excellence

CDR Kevin Elker, Federal Medical Center Rochester, BOP

Lucille Woodville Memorial Award For Maternal Child Excellence

Amy Passero, RN BSN, Pine Ridge Service Unit, IHS

Nurse Responder Of The Year

CDR Timothy G. Gruber, Region IX, HHS/ASPR

Publication Awards

The RADM O. Marie Henry Publication Award for Clinical Practice

LTJG Keith Marin, RN, BSN, OCN and Paula Muehlbauer, RN, MSN, OCN—NIH

The RADM Faye G. Abdellah Award for Nursing Research

Margaret Bevens, RH, PhD, AOCN—NIH

RADM Julia R. Plotnick Publication Award for Health/Nursing Policy

Beverly Gallauresi, RN, MPH

Melissa Eakle, MSN, MBA

Audrey Morrison, RN, BSN—FDA

Minnigerode Nursing Excellence Awards

Hanzel Award for Administrative Activities

LCDR Sara Lang, RN, BSN—HIS

McLaughlin Award for Clinical Services

CDR Susan Brown, FNP-BC CWOCN—IHS

Petry-Leone Award for Health Promotion and Education

CDR Janice Adams-King—USDA

Hasselmeyer Award for Research Initiatives

CAPT Carol Moffett—NIH

Gregg Group Award for Teamwork

Jicarilla Service Unit under the leadership of CAPT Diane Holzem—IHS

There is still time to nominate nurses for the 2008 AMSUS awards at <http://www.amsus.org/awards>. New deadline is July 15, 2008. Please take this opportunity to give visibility to the excellence of nursing.

Readiness & Preparedness

We continue to participate in the Secretary's Health Diplomacy Initiative to deliver humanitarian assistance, perform public health Assessments, and provide health care training in Latin America and the Pacific Rim and Pacific Islands. We are grateful to the nurses who volunteered for these missions, to staff who pick up the slack in their absence, and to the supervisors who support this. The first of three missions has been completed on the USS Boxer; an average of 900 patients a day were seen as part of this mission. The USNS Mercy is anchored in Vietnam and in its first 9 days provided services to over 9,000 clients. The third mission will start in early August. Hurricane season has officially begun and officers are being rostered and on call for anticipated needs. Remember to check your readiness status as we continue to strive for 100%.

Comment

As we celebrate Independence Day and the freedom it represents, let us resolve to continue our fight against disease, illness and injury until we achieve freedom from the threats to our Nation's health. Thank you nurses for all that you do to defend the security of our health and safety.

On behalf of the Office of the Surgeon General, have a safe and happy summer holiday

Carol Romano PhD, RN, FAAN
Assistant Surgeon General
Chief Nurse Officer, US Public Health Service

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