



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



Dear PHS Civil Service, Tribal, and Commissioned Corps Nurses,

Happy Holidays!

As we reach the end of another successful and productive year, we can be proud of our many achievements, which promoted and advanced the public's health and Nursing. A few of these achievements include the implementation of the Federal Public Health Service Nursing (FPHSN) Strategic Plan, FPHSN Strategic Plan Survey, Nurse Recognition Day (NRD), Nurse Category Day (COF), two Federal Public Health Nurse Leadership Meetings, two Nursing All-Hands Meetings, N-PAC leadership activities, and the Nursing Category maintaining Basic Readiness Status as a priority. The success of these events would not have been possible without the hard work, support and dedication from the NPAC Leadership and PHS Nurses all around the country.

Yet, despite everyone's extraordinary efforts to protect, promote and advance the health and safety of our Nation, tragedy and sadness surrounds us. It is with a heavy heart and deep sorrow that I ask for a moment of silence to remember the fallen beautiful young children and heroic teachers, their grieving families, Newtown community and our mourning Nation from the horrific tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Per news from DCCPR, this past weekend the State of Connecticut requested a team of mental health professionals be deployed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to Newtown, CT. Today, there are 28 USPHS mental health providers from Mental Health Team (MHT) #4 (with augmentation from MHT#3, MHT#5 and Services Access Team (SAT) #3, supporting and providing services and consultation for a total of 8 missions in and around Newtown, CT. Thank you for stepping up in this time of great need.

In addition, the Commissioned Corps has deployed a health care strike team in the spirit of teamwork and collaboration to assist for 12 weeks with improving the medical and hospital care for the people of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). RADM Newton Kendig (BOP), Officer in Charge, is leading the 6-11 member team and CAPT Lisa Hogan, nurse manager (BOP), is leading the nursing components. Other team members include CDR Daniel Hesselgesser, clinical laboratory manager (CMS); CDR Sylvie Cohen, physician/safety officer (BOP); CDR Kathleen Dotson, pharmacy manager (BOP); and LT Lane Vause, medical technologist (CMS).

And, I want to personally thank the nurses for their recent participation in the Department's response to Hurricane and Super-storm "Sandy." Once again, the USPHS Commissioned Corps Nurses were called, responded, and provided expertise and leadership during the emergency response and recovery phases of operations. Nurses provided much needed medical/nursing support to the displaced people in a variety of austere environments including emergency shelters, temporary hospitals, and community settings while basic services were slowly restored to the area. I very much appreciate your willingness to step forward and represent the Commissioned Corps. I am also well aware many of you were deployed during the Thanksgiving Holiday

and offered that extra sacrifice that is at the heart of our service. Our continued success depends on your volunteerism and personal sacrifice to effectively prepare for and respond to public health and medical emergencies.

I will be setting up a debriefing/hot wash meeting in January for all the nurses and supporting supervisors that responded to Hurricane Sandy to discuss lessons learned from this recent deployment. Conference call capabilities will be available for those in the field.

### **Past conferences & Meetings:**

#### **Officer Basic Course Pinning Ceremony**

The Pinning Ceremony for Officer Basic Course (OBC) Class 59 took place at the Holiday Inn Gaithersburg, Gaithersburg, MD on 9 November 2012. There were a total of 35 Officers, (11 were Nurse Officers) who attended the Course. I had the pleasure of attending on behalf of the Surgeon General and the wonderful opportunity to spend some time with them in addressing their questions and concerns.

### **Upcoming Conferences and Meetings:**

#### **Federal Public Health Nurse Leadership Meeting**

The Federal Public Health Nurse Leadership Meeting is set to reconvene on **21 February 2013**, 8:00am – 12:30pm, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS) Headquarters, Baltimore, MD. The Federal Public Health Nurse Leadership group is comprised of senior nurse leaders throughout the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), and chaired by me. The purpose of the meeting is to establish a clear and unified vision and coordinated action plan for USPHS nursing leadership to assist in improving the health and well being of our Nation.

\*\* I am seeking 2 nurses in the DC area who are interested in volunteering their time to take notes during the meeting. This is a wonderful opportunity to join us in policy and program discussions.

If you are interested in volunteering, please email your CV to LT David Young [dyoung@hrsa.gov](mailto:dyoung@hrsa.gov) by **COB 18 January 2013**. Supervisory approval is required.

#### **PHS Nursing All Hands Meeting**

The next PHS Nursing All Hands Meeting is set to take place on **21 February 2013**, 1:00pm - 2:00pm in CMS Headquarters, Baltimore, MD.

### **Spotlight on PHS Nurses and others:**

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

AHRQ's senior advisor for nursing **Dr. Beth Collins Sharp, Ph.D., M.S.N.**, speaks about her perspective on trends in nursing, why nurses are important in research, and the role of nurses at AHRQ. Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), recognizes nurses for their vast influence and importance on health care research and policy.

To read the full article, please click on the link below:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/research/dec12/1212RA1.htm>

Recently, one of our own PHS nurse officers, **CDR Gettie Audain**, who is assigned to HRSA, promoted the Federal Public Health Service Nursing Strategic Plan, which is aligned with the National Prevention Strategy, to a fitness guru. She states,

“Singing the National Anthem with the USPHS Music Ensemble at the Navy Exchange grand opening day was a great day for PHS. I decided to browse around the store after our performance and really take a look at the larger-than-life, mall-like design of a store. Before I realized it, hours pasted and the crowd was accumulating quickly. It wasn’t long before I noticed how my cart was getting fuller, there were more people in civilian clothing walking around, and my Service Dress Blues stood out. Shortly after that realization, it seems as if it all happened so quickly. I got filmed on the Fox 5 evening news and three Oberto beef jerky company representatives stopped me in the aisles and asked to take photos for possible commercial pictures since their company sponsors the Wounded Warriors program.

Regardless of all that attention, it all came together for me as I shared my personal weight loss story to my favorite fitness guru Denise Austin. While standing at her autograph table, Fox 5 reporter John Henrehan and his crew kept filming us, listening to me talk about this year’s 40 lbs weight loss after going through complicated foot surgery. She seemed thrilled when I told her I was a nurse PHS officer and that I took my weight loss further by becoming a health coach. I also shared with her that *Healthy Eating* is one of our PHS nurses’ four priority health initiatives. The other three health initiatives were *Healthy Heart, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing, and Tobacco Free Living*. I was glad to be one of many nurses representing these health initiatives and who contribute to our Federal Public Health Service Nursing Strategic Plan every day. It’s almost a blur now but on NEX’s grand opening day, I recall taking tons of photos with my favorite fitness guru yet all you can see in the news clip is a millisecond of our conversation. However, if you listen closely, you can hear her say to me, “You look great!” It felt good to represent a positive look as a PHS Nurse Officer!”

Here is a link to the video: <http://www.myfoxdc.com/story/20063485/new-kind-of-navy-exchange>

### **A Champion Bodybuilder at CMS**

**CDR Kathleen Wallace**, a CMS PHS Nurse Officer who works in the Recovery Audit Program recently came in 1<sup>st</sup> place in a bodybuilding competition on 17 November 2012 in York, PA. Congratulations to CDR Wallace!



## **Sad News:**

**Vernice Doris Ferguson has passed.** Vernice Doris Ferguson, RN, MA, FAAN, FRCN, 84, died on Saturday, 8 December 2012 at her home in Washington, DC. A truly exceptional nursing leader and human being, she served as the Academy's President in 1981-1983, and President of Sigma Theta Tau International in the 1985-1987 biennium. In 1998, she was named a Living Legend of the American Academy of Nursing.

You can find out more about this extraordinary nurse at [www.nyu.edu](http://www.nyu.edu) or the link below:

<http://www.nyu.edu/about/news-publications/news/2012/12/10/vernice-d-ferguson-nyu-nursing-alum-head-of-the-veterans-affairs-and-national-institutes-of-health-nursing-departments-dies-at-the-age-of-84.html>

**U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye has passed.** As you have heard, and per Dr. Ada Sue Hinshaw, Dean, USUHS Graduate School of Nursing wrote: "U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, who represented the state of Hawaii for more than 53 years, passed away on Monday, 17 December 2012, at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Senator Inouye was the most senior member of the U.S. Senate, the second-longest serving in Senate history, and served as the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Senate President Pro Tempore. He is known for his distinguished record as a legislative leader and as one of the most influential public servants of our time." Per the USUHS President, "Senator Inouye was a highly decorated combat veteran, having earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroic actions in Europe during World War II. As a result of injuries sustained in combat, Senator Inouye spent more than a year and a half in a military hospital. His personal experiences while there led to a deep appreciation of the military health system. Throughout his very distinguished career in the Senate, Daniel Inouye was a powerful advocate for military medicine and the profession of nursing. He was responsible for the establishment of the Uniformed Services University's Graduate School of Nursing and the Tri-Service Nursing Research Program. Senator Inouye was a strong champion for military medical research and the advancement of military medical, nursing and scientific education at USUHS. Senator Daniel K. Inouye's passing is a major loss for the entire nursing profession. His death marks the end of an era for military nursing and for nursing, in general. He has been an outstanding, ever supportive champion of nursing initiatives and growth for many years. The Senator was active and supportive in the creation of the National Center of Nursing Research, the re-designation of the National Institute of Nursing Research and more recently, supporting the anti-trust issues re: full scope of practice for APRNs. While we mourn his loss, we are extremely grateful for Senator Inouye's unwavering support, leadership, and his innumerable contributions to the nursing profession. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and to the citizens of Hawaii whom he represented so well."

## **Nursing Awards Nominations**

### **American Red Cross - Call for Nominations for the 2013 Florence Nightingale Medal**

#### **Nomination Form**

The Florence Nightingale Medal, awarded by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), celebrates the contribution of nurses and nursing aides to the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to humanitarian action in general. "By ensuring that vulnerable people receive medical care in some of the most difficult circumstances, nurses and nursing aides personify the spirit of humanity, one of our fundamental principles," said ICRC President Peter Maurer.

If you know a nurse whose service reflects the spirit of humanity, consider nominating that individual for the Florence Nightingale Medal. The Medal is awarded to nurses or nursing aides around the world who are active

members of a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society or of an affiliated medical or nursing institution. Nominees have distinguished themselves in times of peace or war by:

- Exceptional courage and devotion to the wounded, sick or disabled or to civilian victims of a conflict or disaster; or
- Exemplary services or a creative and pioneering spirit in the areas of public health or nursing education.

Don't miss this opportunity to nominate an exceptional nurse for the prestigious Florence Nightingale Medal. Nominations are **due Friday, 1 February 2013**. They MUST be submitted on the ICRC Nomination Form (see link above), which is a word document that you can fill in by computer. The American Red Cross will forward all eligible nominations to the ICRC; the ICRC will announce Medal winners in May.

Nominations should be scanned and emailed to [NationalAwards@redcross.org](mailto:NationalAwards@redcross.org). Please email any questions to Donna Dorsey at [Ddorseybon@cs.com](mailto:Ddorseybon@cs.com).

### **N-PAC MANE AWARDS** **Deadline: 11 January 2013**

The United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Professional Advisory Committee for Nursing is seeking nominations for the Minnegeode Awards for Nursing Excellence (MANE). These awards recognize and honor contribution(s) by Commissioned Corps, Civil Service, and Tribal Direct hire nurses of outstanding and sustained nature, which have had a substantial impact on the mission of the USPHS.

#### **MANE Awards**

The MANE awards will be presented to each award recipient by the USPHS Chief Nurse Officer (CNO) at the annual Nursing Recognition Day.

#### **Eligibility:**

Department of Health and Human Services and Non-OPDIV nurses (Civil Service, Commissioned Corps, or Tribal Direct Hire; Licensed Practical Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Registered Nurse or Advanced Practice Nurse). All nominations should cover activities which have been performed/ accomplished within the past 2 years.

#### **Criteria:**

Nominee(s) must demonstrate through innovation and creativity, outstanding nursing contributions with measurable benefits. Department of Health and Human Services nurses may be nominated for any one of the following MANE awards:

#### **1. McLaughlin Award for Clinical Services;**

Exemplary leadership and skill resulting in noteworthy accomplishments as a clinician over a period of time focusing on the timely and ethical delivery of health care in a direct care setting. The provision of services improve health outcomes and/or services for patients/clients as well as enhance employee and/or patient/client relationships, productivity, quality, work methods and timeliness of health care delivery.

#### **2. Hanzel Award for Administrative Activities**

Exemplary leadership as a nurse executive resulting in noteworthy accomplishments, such as:

- Management of a health care program
- Development or improvement of methods of delivery of services;

- Enhancement of employee and/or patient/client relationships, productivity, quality, work methods and timeliness of health care delivery;
- Organization or implementation of a program demonstrating creative utilization of resources; or
- Development, modification or implementation of health and regulatory policy.

### **3. Hasselmeyer Award for Research Initiatives**

Exemplary leadership resulting in noteworthy accomplishments in conducting nursing research and clinical investigation which stimulates the development of new knowledge and practice in nursing and/or the health professions.

### **4. Petry Leone Award for Health Promotion and Education**

Exemplary leadership resulting in noteworthy accomplishments in patient/client or professional education, which informs and educates consumers and/or health care practitioners about significant health related issues and promotes healthy lifestyles.

### **5. Gregg Group Award for Teamwork**

Exemplary leadership contributions by a team of nurses resulting in noteworthy accomplishments and positive outcomes towards the attainment of PHS goals. Describe how the nominated nurse functioned as a team with other members of the group, the nature of the nursing leadership and participation, and the level of the nurse's contribution. Explain how nursing participation and input enhanced the accomplishments, outcomes and impact of the work done.

#### **Examples include:**

- Contributions to the health of individuals, families and/ or communities through initiatives implemented at the local, state and/or national level
- Coordination or participation in the development of new program(s) and/or establishing new standards of care
- Coordination or participation in the development and/or implementation of interdisciplinary health care initiative(s)
- Contributions to interdisciplinary efforts (or the work of multiple disciplines) in achieving common health care goals.

### **Nomination Procedure**

Anyone may nominate an eligible nurse/team for service(s) that meet the purpose for which these awards have been established. All nominations submitted should:

1. Describe the degree of impact on the public health mission of the PHS by a nurse (or team of nurses for the Gregg Group Award for Teamwork).
2. Describe how the nominee(s) exceeds normal performance requirements.
3. Submitted or endorsed by the nominee's first line supervisor.

Nominations will be reviewed by the Professional Advisory Committee for Nursing (NPAC) Awards Subcommittee and forwarded to the CNO with recommendations. All Commissioned Officers must be OFRD qualified. Final selection and presentation will be made by the CNO. More than one award may be given in each category, but an award in every category may not be given every year. Selection will be based solely on the submitted nominations.

To review last year's winners go to the following link [www.phs-nurse.org/awards-sub-committee/2012-minnegerode-awards-for-nursing-excellence-awards](http://www.phs-nurse.org/awards-sub-committee/2012-minnegerode-awards-for-nursing-excellence-awards) . Cover sheet, submission and blinded copy must be received ELECTRONICALLY by **11 January 2013**, and should be sent to the MANE Awards Team Leaders, LT Daniel Wagoner [DWagoner@bop.gov](mailto:DWagoner@bop.gov) and LCDR George Flores [gflores@scf.cc](mailto:gflores@scf.cc) .

**\*Please include the Cover Sheet for MANE Award Nominations, the nomination, and a blinded copy. The blinded copy needs to have ALL identifying information removed. NO nomination will be scored without the Cover Sheet/blinded copy. All submissions must be limited to two pages.**

*Nominations' will be forwarded to the NPAC Repository & Mentorship Subcommittee for inclusion in the NPAC publications database.*

Additionally, information on this award and others is available at the N-PAC Awards Sub-committee website, [www.npac-awards.org](http://www.npac-awards.org).

### **News pertaining to Commissioned Corps Nurse Officers:**

**Basic Readiness:** The Basic Readiness Status Report is expected to run on **31 Dec 2012**. Please remember that the Flu Shot is a requirement this quarter to maintain readiness. If you are facing issues, please do not hesitate to contact the following NPAC Readiness and Response Subcommittee Co-Chair:

LCDR Leorey Saligan, Co-Chair, [saliganl@mail.nih.gov](mailto:saliganl@mail.nih.gov)

As the largest category in the Corps, it is imperative that we set the standards for the other categories to follow. Our percentages have a great impact on the total Corps percentage meeting Basic Readiness. My expectation for FY 2013 is for us to be in the Top Five consistently. Thank you to those that maintain and retain their readiness status.

**Operational Dress Uniform:** As you may already know, the ODU is available for purchase. Policy and directives of proper ODU wear have been posted on CCMIS. Please be aware that you are given up to 31 August 2013 to purchase the new ODU, at which time the BDU will be phased out.

Note: Supply Issues with the Operational Dress Uniform (ODU):

The Division of Commissioned Corps Personnel and Readiness has been notified that the US Coast Guard Uniform Distribution Center (UDC) is currently experiencing supply shortages of some components of the ODU. Specifically, the Large Regular and Medium Regular trousers and the 42 Regular and 44 Regular shirts, are on backorder from the manufacturers. The UDC is diligently working with its suppliers to fill the orders and make available these sizes as soon as possible. There remains ample time for Corps officers to obtain the ODU before the mandatory phase-in date of 1 September 2013. Please remain patient, as the UDC is doing their best to accommodate ~6700 Corps officers, all NOAA officers and their own active duty, reserve and auxiliary Coast Guardsmen. To date, roughly 25% of the Corps has transitioned to the new ODU, based on orders from the UDC and Navy Exchange. This estimate is on pace for initial projections of acquisition and transition to the new uniform. Should you have any concerns or questions about the ODU or any uniform issue, please contact the Uniform Coordinator, LCDR Kyle Lyons at [james.lyons@hhs.gov](mailto:james.lyons@hhs.gov) or 240-453-6098.

### **Recent Retirements**

Congratulations to RADM Denise Canton, Surgeon General's Senior Policy Advisor for Commissioned Corps Special Projects, on her retirement after a stellar 33 year career. She had a glorious retirement ceremony on 30 November 2012 at the Holiday Inn, Gaithersburg, MD. I wish her all the best on future endeavors and fair winds and following seas!

**Joyous Holiday Wishes:**

I am very proud and honored to have worked alongside you in 2012 in “Protecting, Promoting and Advancing the Health and Safety of our Nation”. As we embark on a new year, I look forward to our journey together as we continue to enhance the Nursing Category, the Nursing profession, and the health of all Americans.

I wish you a joyous and safe holiday season with your family and friends!  
Happy Holidays and a Happy, Healthy New Year to All!

Sincerely,

Kerry

RADM Kerry Paige Nessler  
Assistant Surgeon General  
Chief Nurse Officer, USPHS

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