ANA President Spends Day With DPH Nurses

Mary McCutcheon, NLC Immediate Past Chair, HAH Director of Client Services

How do you inspire DPH nurses when we are in the midst of a nursing shortage and a City budget deficit? The answer is to spend some time with Mary Foley. As President of the American Nurses Association, Mary Foley has traveled the nation and the world, and is intimately aware of the struggles and successes that today’s nurses are experiencing.

Mary Foley came home to San Francisco from Washington, D.C. to spend May 3rd with DPH nursing. Starting with morning rounds with Sue Currin at SFGH, Mary met and talked to staff nurses, managers, leaders, educators, students and others. At the reception hosted by Sharon McCole-Wicher and the Nursing Leadership Council, nurses from across all areas of DPH practice met Mary and networked with colleagues. Mary spoke to a packed audience at Carr Auditorium and helped us understand the nationwide nursing shortage.

Mary’s keynote speech gave us a vision for nursing and provided a blueprint. Mary’s straight talk took stock of where nursing is today, how we got there, and challenged us to help create and participate in the future of health care. Mary’s talk was like a beacon of light in a storm, and we all left knowing that our unity and commitment make the journey possible.

Mary spent the afternoon at Laguna Honda Hospital, rounding with Mivic Hirose and being honored at a reception organized by Gayling Gee. The afternoon “tea party” was worthy of Florence Nightingale! Mary’s day finished at the LHH Hospice Unit’s “happy hour” where staff and patients gather every Friday with food, drink and music to celebrate life.

Being able to kick off National Nurses Week by honoring her hometown nurses was as inspiring to Mary Foley as it was to DPH nurses. Mary gained new perspectives on health care issues from the many nurses she spoke with throughout the day, and was often moved by the commitment and caring demonstrated by DPH nurses. Next month Mary Foley completes her term as ANA President and we extend our best wishes and gratitude for sharing her courage, vision, and leadership with the proud nurses of the San Francisco Department of Public Health.
Dorothy was a mentor and inspiration for many nurses at SFGH, particularly night shift nurses since Dorothy was the night shift supervisor. The scholarship in her honor recognizes Dorothy’s contributions to SFGH and continues her legacy of supporting the professional development of individual nurses.

Further acknowledgments came from Commissioner Arthur Jackson, Gene O’Connell, SFGH Executive Administrator, and a proclamation from Mayor Brown. The evening was capped by a raffle, great food, libations and socializing, all in recognition of the differences that nurses make.

Nurse Week at Laguna Honda – Film and Tea
Susan Spencer, RN, MS, LHH Director of Education and Training

Laguna Honda celebrated Nurse Week by honoring nurses in film, in history, and in recognition of leadership. Films honoring nurses were shown at LHH to highlight the role of nurses in history and healthcare. Staff members kicked off Nurse Week by catering an international tea for Mary Foley. Ms. Foley had an opportunity to tour Laguna Honda and speak to some of our residents. Staff provided food representing the cuisine of Iran, Turkey, Lithuania, Japan and England. Tables were filled with goodies, teas, china cups, and wonderful flowers.

On Tuesday, May 7th, we celebrated Nurse Week with our nursing staff and colleagues. Among our honored guests were Commissioner Arthur Jackson of the Health Commission; Drs. Jeanie Kayser-Jones and Jill Bennett of UCSF School of Nursing; Chita Torres of John Adams Community College; Ruth Ann Terry and Louise Bailey of the California Board of Registered Nursing. LHH Food Services provided a wonderful array of cakes and beverages for the nursing staff and the Activities Department gave expert assistance in decorating Gerald Simon Auditorium. Jo Anne Powell designed a beautiful storyboard honoring Florence Nightingale. It was a wonderful celebration of nursing.

Nurse Week at Community Programs
Julie Ray, RN, CMHS Quality Improvement

The theme selected by ANA for Nurse Week 2002 was “Nurses Care for America.” This year in conjunction with NLC and in step with ANA’s theme, Primary Care, PHP and Community Mental Health Services celebrated Nurse Week at 101 Grove Street on Wednesday, May 8th, 2002. Approximately 45 nursing staff attended. Jo Anne Powell prepared storyboards that chronicled a timeline of nursing starting with Florence Nightingale. Included in the timeline was a photograph of two of Phyllis Harding’s (Primary Care) women relatives in military attire saluting each other; one from WWI, the other from WWII. The films shown were: “An American Nurse at War-The Story of Red Cross Nurse Marian McCune Rice” and the promotional television advertisements courtesy of Johnson & Johnson. Special thanks to Jo Anne Powell of the Golden State Nursing Foundation for providing the storyboards and for procuring the historical video. Jo Anne is a walking font of historical information and is available for oral and video presentations. She can be reached at 415-682-3265.

Anyone interested in obtaining the J&J promotional videos and nursing
profession recruitment posters/pamphlets can do so by calling J&J at 1-888-981-9111. These items are free.

Janssen Pharmaceutica Inc., a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson, was gracious enough to provide food to make the celebration more complete.

A Tribute to Dorothy Washington, RN
May 27, 1945-March 31, 2002

Doreen Meyer, RN, MS, SFGH, Nursing Supervisor

Dorothy George graduated from O'Connor Nursing School and immediately enlisted for military service—she served as an air evacuation nurse in Vietnam and spoke proudly of her service as a “flygirl” shuttling injured soldiers to medical treatment. Born in Salinas, she still chose San Francisco as her new “home” after returning from Vietnam, and as quickly as she had enlisted, she chose San Francisco General as her new “work home.”

After working in different staff and managerial positions, Dorothy became the night shift supervisor in 1980. She set a special standard for supervisors, particularly because of the intelligence, love and generosity she brought to both her patients and her staff at “the General.” “You saw,” one nurse said “the beauty of nursing in her…it had no limits for her.” Dorothy was dedicated in every aspect of her work, and always met others with a genuine, ready smile and helping spirit.

Dorothy touched the professional and personal lives of every staff she met, seeing staff as whole people in whose lives she participated, sharing in their personal joys and sorrows and offering herself as their attentive “listener”—always there and always nonjudgmental. She was a mentor to staff’s professional growth, an advisor and role model in clinical care, a friend who was a part of their own life changes and milestones, and a welcome fountain of smiles and laughter night after night.

In the end, Dorothy was our inspiration who, after showing us how to live, also showed us how to die with grace, dignity and love.

In Memory of Dorothy

Leslie Dubbin, RN, SFGH, Nursing Supervisor

The one thing I will always remember about Dorothy Washington was her consistency. That made Dorothy an incredibly genuine person. One always knew where one stood with her. She was direct and honest. She was firm but kind. She was never frazzled, always calm and collected.

Dorothy cared about you. And she’d let you know it. She’d let you know it in sometimes subtle but powerful ways. I remember when my father died. Dorothy came to me and put her arm around me. She didn’t have to say anything at all. But I knew that if I needed her she would be right there for me. She was an incredible comfort.

Dorothy was loved by all that she touched for those reasons and more. The one trait you hear most about Dorothy was her kindness. Everyone saw it because it radiated from her. You saw it and you felt it and you trusted it. And therefore, you trusted Dorothy. She was an incredible woman. And although she is terribly missed, we still have years of wonderful memories to keep us company.

Primary Care Pilot Program

Phyllis Harding, RN, MS, Director of Primary Care Nursing

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs and San Francisco Department of Public Health Primary Care Division have implemented a pilot program intended to inform Primary Care patients, who are veterans of the armed forces, about health care services available to them through the Veterans Administration (VA). The intent is not to shift these patients from DPH to the VA, but to let eligible patients know about ways the VA can augment the health services available to them. After the pilot program is evaluated, a decision will be made on whether to expand the program later.

Three Primary Care Clinics have been selected for the pilot program, and they are Tom Waddell Health Center, Silver Avenue Health Center, and Southeast Health Center. Social Workers from the Department of Veterans Affairs spend half a day at each of the three health centers to talk with veterans about their eligibility for VA health care benefits. Those veterans who are interested in taking advantage of the veterans’ programs can register on site. Primary Care employees at these health centers with questions about the VA program pilot should contact their respective broad network of primary care clinics of the Department.
12th Annual Bay Area Medical-Surgical Nursing Conference

Rosaleen Flynn, RN, BS, SFGH Nurse Educator

This annual nursing symposium was held in the South San Francisco Conference Center on April 5th & 6th, 2002. Each year, during this time this conference is held to promote medical-surgical nursing as a specialty. Indeed, the aim was to provide a medical-surgical conference planned, coordinated and presented by medical-surgical nurses. One of the earliest results was the realization of how large that scope really is, and that scope of practice is reflected in the variety of topics and the variety of presenters. We have had physicians, public relations/media, RNs, dieticians, humorists, university professors, and politicians such as assembly state representatives and others.

Next year’s dates are already set for April 3rd and 4th, 2003 at the South San Francisco Conference Center. Flyers will be distributed in January 2003. Contact Rosaleen (206-3672 or via e-mail) if you have ideas for speakers or did not receive your flyer.

LHH Psychosocial Cluster’s Anniversary

Lucy Fisher, RN, MS
LHH Nursing Supervisor

The Psychosocial Cluster units at Laguna Honda just celebrated our third anniversary. We held a party in “The Woods,” the resident dining and activity room, with retired staff who were members of the original group joining us. The original three units were formed (and a year later, four more added) to work with behavioral problems and psychosocial challenges, including comorbid substance use. One of the special focus units, the Geropsychosocial unit (GPU), is for the older adult with psychosocial challenges and significant medical conditions. The Neurobehavioral Psychosocial Unit (NPU) is for residents with behavioral and interpersonal problems primarily due to a neurological disorder. The Mixed Psychosocial Unit (MPU) works primarily with residents with behavioral or psychosocial problems, including substance use, coupled with significant medical conditions.

In addition to nursing, the cluster staff include activity therapists, a psychiatric occupational therapist, neuropsychologists, physicians and social workers. The treatment team also includes consultants from Substance Abuse Treatment Services, Nutritional Services, Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy.

Our greatest successes are residents who return to their families or community settings, after months—or even years—at Laguna Honda. These successes are results of interdisciplinary efforts, including family teaching, setting up Health at Home care, and health education.

One resident, for example, was discharged from the NPU after almost two years of psychosocial and physical rehabilitation: initially, she was incontinent, dependent on a wheelchair, required a hoyer lift for transfer, and was unable or unwilling to communicate with others. By the time she returned to her mother and two children, she had formed relationships with staff and other residents, she was continent, and only needed a walker to ambulate. Staff say that she sang and danced in evening social activities, and after a year with her family, she is doing well.

We welcome referrals to any of our psychosocial cluster units from the community, private or DPH agencies. Please call Brenda Austin, Ph.D., at 759-4590 for referral information. Lucy Fisher, RN, MS (759-2353) is the program supervisor for the cluster.
Improving Institutional Pain Management: The Pain Resource Nurse (PRN) Program at LHH

Anne Hughes, RN, MN, CNS, NP, LHH Palliative Care Advanced Practice Nurse

Natividad Dullas, RN, BSN, LHH Clinical Educator

Nahidi Mansoureh, RN, CHPN, LHH Hospice Nurse Manager

In late January 2002, the Department of Education and Training at LHH hosted a two-day pain management educational program modeled after a program at the City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, California. Dr. Betty Ferrell developed the Pain Resource Nurse (PRN) Training Program at the City of Hope almost ten years ago. Since then, hospitals and skilled nursing facilities around the country have adopted the PRN program as one means of improving institutional pain management. LHH nursing leaders recognized that the assessment and management of pain for its almost 1100 residents being cared for on 41 units required many nurses to increase their knowledge and skills. As a result, the Nursing Division decided to develop a PRN program that included the two-day intensive and as importantly follow-up monthly meetings to support nurses assuming the PRN role.

The two-day training included 55 nurses from LHH and 15 nurses from other parts of the Department of Public Health (e.g. SFGH, Health at Home, Chinatown Health Center, Broderick Hotel and Action Point). The faculty included two internationally recognized nurses who are pain management experts, Dr. Betty Ferrell and Dr. Christine Miaskowski. Dr. Ferrell is a renowned palliative care nurse researcher who developed the PRN program and recently edited the Oxford University Press, Textbook on Palliative Nursing. Dr. Miaskowski is Professor and Chairperson, Department of Physiological Nursing at UCSF, and is the current President of the American Pain Society (the first nurse to lead this interdisciplinary organization). Other invited speakers included Dr. Ben Rich, ethicist and attorney from UC-Davis; Dr. Steve Rao, psychologist from Psychosocial Medicine, SFGH; and Rhonda Nichols, CNS/Pain Consultant. LHH faculty included Michelle Fouts, Pharm.D., Ron Walent, CNS, Derek Kerr, MD, Nahidi Mansoureh and Anne Hughes.

In the four months since the PRN program began, LHH nurses are already improving the pain management of their residents! Here’s just one example: Three PRNs (Cristina Hipolito, Elena Mercado and Edna Aquino), who work in the Chronic Care Cluster at LHH wondered if the nighttime agitation and vocalizations of their cognitively impaired female residents (who cannot self report pain) may be due to untreated pain. They initiated an empiric trial of administering the already ordered PRN acetaminophen at bedtime and observed the residents’ responses. Within days, the milieu had changed dramatically. The agitation and nighttime vocalizations decreased and all their residents slept more soundly through the night. These PRNs collaborated with the ward physician to institute routine bedtime analgesics and continue to observe their residents for signs of discomfort. What a success story!

If you have any questions about the PRN program, please contact Anne Hughes, Naty Dullas or Nahidi Mansoureh. They serve as the PRN Coordinating Committee and were responsible for the development of the two-day training and oversight for the ongoing program.

Honors and Awards

California’s Nursing Community Honors
Mary Louise Fleming

Gail Cobe, RN, MS, LHH Director of Education and Training

On April 12 more than 500 nurses gathered in Los Angeles to honor eight nurses at NurseWeek’s California Nursing Excellence Award ceremony. This year, Mary Louise Fleming, LHH Senior Associate Hospital Administrator for Nursing Services, was awarded the California Nursing Excellence Award for Advancing the Profession.

Mary Louise was recognized for her efforts to transform long-term care nursing and to promote gerontological nursing. She was nominated by the staff nurses and clinicians whose recognition of her leadership, her commitment to promoting a professional nursing practice model at LHH, has inspired them to be the best they can be. Some of the innovations Mary Louise has advanced at LHH which were noted included the
development of distinct clusters to identify clinical programs within this 1100 bed skilled nursing facility and to support staff competency working with unique patient populations and the development of partnerships with nursing programs (i.e., University of California, San Francisco and San Francisco State University) to facilitate graduate nursing education.

In her acceptance speech, Mary Louise said, "I want to say thank you to my staff because this goes to them. They’re the ones that have done the work. I was very surprised that I was nominated for this [award] and I’m very grateful..."

Other DPH nurses who have been nominated or awarded the California Nursing Excellence Award include Anne Hughes, LHH Advanced Practice Nurse, Mildred Crear, PHP Maternal Child Services Director, and Mivic Hirose, LHH Associate Director of Nursing.

The following employees were acknowledged at the Health Commission meetings:

- Ann Stangby, RN, has been appointed by the State of California Department of Health Services and Emergency Medical Services Authority to serve on the Hospital Bioterrorism Preparedness Planning Task Force.

- Cynthia Marshall, RN, received the DPH Employee Recognition Award in April 2002.

The Nursing Notes is published quarterly by the DPH Nursing Leadership Council for DPH Nurses. The Editorial Board hopes that you’ve enjoyed reading the newsletter. Feel free to send comments, feedback, and ideas. If you have questions you would like answered via this newsletter, please send them to any member of the Editorial Board. We welcome your input.

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